



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 9 Nov 2021

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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 International flights returning to SEA</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/travel/international-flights-returning-to-sea-tac/281-f42ab035-609c-4160-ad19-fc2501690355">https://www.king5.com/article/travel/international-flights-returning-to-sea-tac/281-f42ab035-609c-4160-ad19-fc2501690355</a>
GIST	<p>SEATAC, Wash. — Overseas flights are returning to Sea-Tac Airport after a steep decline in international traffic during the pandemic, according to the Port of Seattle.</p> <p>Sea-Tac had 42 international flights pre-pandemic. The airport now has 30, including some new destinations, such as Doha, Qatar.</p> <p>Flights to Paris, Tokyo, and Singapore are scheduled to resume in December.</p> <p>Starting Monday, the U.S. began accepting fully vaccinated travelers at airports and land borders, doing away with a COVID-19 restriction that dates back to the Trump administration. The new rules allow air travel from previously restricted countries as long as the traveler has proof of vaccination and a negative COVID-19 test. Land travel from Mexico and Canada will require proof of vaccination but no test.</p> <p>Airlines are expecting more travelers from Europe and elsewhere. Data from travel and analytics firm Cirium showed airlines are increasing flights between the United Kingdom and the U.S. by 21% this month over last month.</p> <p>The Port of Seattle said there was a slight increase in international passenger traffic Monday.</p> <p>Prior to this week, Sea-Tac averaged 2,100 – 2,400 international passengers on Mondays. The airport was anticipating about 3,100 international travelers Monday as COVID-19 restrictions loosened.</p> <p>The reopening of the United States to international travelers is a much-needed boost for merchants at Pike Place Market, which welcomed visitors from around the globe prior to the pandemic.</p> <p>“It's been challenging, a lot slower, but it's picking up,” said Dan Gregory, an artist who has been selling his works at the market for 19 years.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 Supply chain kink: truck drivers shortage</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/us/politics/trucker-shortage-supply-chain.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/us/politics/trucker-shortage-supply-chain.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Facing more than \$50,000 in student debt, Michael Gary dropped out of college and took a truck driving job in 2012. It paid the bills, he said, and he could reduce his expenses if he lived mostly out of a truck.</p> <p>But over the years, the job strained his relationships. He was away from home for weeks at a time and could not prioritize his health: It took more than three years to schedule an optometry appointment, which he kept canceling because of his irregular work hours. He quit on Oct. 6.</p> <p>“I had no personal life outside of driving a truck,” said Mr. Gary, 58, a resident of Vancouver, Wash. “I finally had enough.”</p> <p>Truck drivers have been in <a href="#">short supply for years</a>, but a wave of retirements combined with those simply quitting for less stressful jobs is exacerbating the <a href="#">supply chain crisis</a> in the United States, leading to empty store shelves, panicked holiday shoppers and <a href="#">congestion at ports</a>. Warehouses around the country are overflowing with products, and delivery times have stretched to months from days or weeks for many goods.</p> <p>A <a href="#">report</a> released last month by the American Trucking Associations estimated that the industry is short 80,000 drivers, a record number, and one the association said could double by 2030 as more retire.</p>

Supply-chain problems stem from a number of factors, including an extraordinary surge in demand for goods and factory shutdowns abroad. But the situation has been compounded by a shortage of truckers and deteriorating conditions across the transportation sector, which have made it even harder for consumers to get the things they want when they want them.

The phenomenon is rippling across the economy, [weighing on growth](#), [pushing up prices](#) for consumers and depressing President Biden's approval rating. But the White House has struggled with how to respond.

Mr. Biden announced last month that major ports and private companies would begin [moving toward 24-hour operation](#) in an effort to ease the gridlock. But early results suggest that trucking remains a major bottleneck in that effort, compounding backlogs at the ports.

The directors of the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach said that, at least initially, few additional truckers were showing up to take advantage of the extended hours.

Gene Seroka, the executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said his port had told the White House in July that about 30 percent of the port's appointments for truckers went unused every day, largely because of shortages of drivers, the chassis they use to pull the loads and warehouse workers to unload items from trucks.

"Here in the port complex, with all this cargo, we need more drivers," Mr. Seroka said.

The [\\$1 trillion infrastructure bill](#) that the House passed last week could help mitigate the shortage. The legislation includes a three-year pilot apprenticeship program that would allow commercial truck drivers as young as 18 to drive across state lines. In most states, [people under 21](#) can receive a commercial driver's license, but federal regulations restrict them from driving interstate routes.

But industry experts said the program was unlikely to fix the immediate problem, given that it could take months to get underway and the fact that many people simply do not want to drive trucks.

Mr. Biden said last month that he would [consider deploying the National Guard](#) to alleviate the trucker shortage, although a White House official said the administration was not actively pursuing the move.

Meera Joshi, the deputy administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, said the agency had focused on easing the [process of obtaining a commercial driver's license](#) after states cut back licensing operations during the coronavirus pandemic. The agency has also extended the hours that certain drivers can work.

"They are the absolute backbone of a big part of our supply chain," Pete Buttigieg, the transportation secretary, said about truckers at a White House briefing on Monday. "We need to respect and, in my view, compensate them better than we have."

The shortage has alarmed trucking companies, which say there are not enough young people to replace those aging out of the work force. The stereotypes attached with the job, the isolating lifestyle and younger generations' focus on pursuing four-year college degrees have made it difficult to entice drivers. Trucking companies have also struggled to retain workers: [Turnover rates](#) have reached as high as 90 percent for large carriers.

In response, the companies have raised their wages. The average weekly earnings for long-distance drivers have increased about 21 percent since the start of 2019, [according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Last year, commercial truck drivers had a median wage of [\\$47,130](#).

To pay for those increases, trucking companies are raising their rates. Jon Gold, the vice president of supply chain and customs policy at the National Retail Federation, said the driver shortage has contributed to steeper costs for retailers, which are trickling down to consumers and pushing up some of the prices at stores.

“We are seeing cost increases at every step of the way in the transportation supply chain,” Mr. Gold said. “From ocean to truck to rail, costs are increasing.”

Derek J. Leathers, the president and chief executive of Werner Enterprises in Omaha, which employs about 9,500 drivers, said its services cost about 15 percent more than prepandemic levels as driver salaries and equipment costs have climbed.

The company is trying to hire about 700 truck drivers — up from about 300 before the pandemic — after demand swelled and retirements left the company short on workers. It has increased driver compensation by about 20 percent since the start of 2020 and expanded the number of driving academies it operates.

“I’ve been in the business for over 30 years,” Mr. Leathers said. “I definitely think this is the tightest driver market I’ve seen in my career.”

Holly McCormick, the vice president of the talent office at Groendyke Transport in Enid, Okla., said that although the company offered an average salary of about \$70,000 a year, fewer people were willing to be away from home for long stretches. Time spent waiting to unload or load cargo has also increased during the pandemic, which has led to lower wages for drivers who are typically paid by the mile, Ms. McCormick said.

Truckers usually are not compensated for the first two hours spent waiting, according to a [report by the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association](#).

“It’s pretty troubling,” Ms. McCormick said. “The number of people that are in the work force continues to shrink.”

Even with increasing wages, some drivers have left the industry altogether. Bob Stanton, 64, quit his job as a long-haul truck driver in October 2020. After he pinched a nerve in his neck, numbing some of the fingers in his left hand, his doctors said he could no longer lift items heavier than 50 pounds.

Mr. Stanton, who lives in Batavia, Ill., said he believed his severe neck and back pain were a result of his nearly two decades working as a truck driver. The irregular work hours also led to him being diagnosed with sleep apnea in 2002, he said. He now works at a company that helps truck drivers who have the disorder.

Jay Wagner, 57, a truck driver who hauls hazardous chemicals, is usually on the road for about three weeks at a time, rarely spending time at his home in Wichita, Kan. Mr. Wagner said he thought about leaving his job every day to spend more time with his wife and grandson, but he was not sure what he would do for work if he quit.

“It’s been my life,” said Mr. Wagner, who has driven trucks for 27 years. “This is what I do.”

There were some benefits, he said, such as the [freedom of the open road](#) and the \$75,000 to \$85,000 he makes annually.

To make up for the shortages, industry leaders and researchers say trucking companies need to make greater investments in [recruiting women and people of color](#). Only 7 percent of truck drivers are women and 40 percent are minorities, according to a [2019 report](#) from the American Trucking Associations.

Some have also called for increasing the weight limits for trucks to allow them to haul more cargo, or permanently lowering the age limit for drivers. The pilot program in the infrastructure bill aims to help recruit more drivers by allowing people as young as 18 to drive interstate routes. But some industry representatives have expressed concerns about the program’s risks and say the federal government should instead focus instead on [improving retention rates](#).

	<p>“If safety is a consideration, as we look at age, you don’t take the number down, you take the number up,” said Todd Spencer, the president of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association.</p> <p>Mr. Buttigieg said the Transportation Department realized that it had to be “very careful about safety” and that the program was an initial test.</p> <p>Some have welcomed the move as necessary. Bob Costello, the chief economist at the American Trucking Associations, said 18-year-olds who were interested in trucking might not wait until they turned 21 to pursue that line of work and could instead wind up with jobs in food or construction. While other supply-chain bottlenecks could clear up after the pandemic, Mr. Costello said the driver shortage was likely to worsen.</p> <p>“If we don’t fix this driver shortage,” he said, “I think going into some of these stores and seeing some of the shelves with nothing on it could be our future.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 India crisis eased; complacency fears</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/world/asia/india-covid-vaccinations.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/world/asia/india-covid-vaccinations.html</a>
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI — India’s coronavirus crisis, <a href="#">which was killing thousands of people</a> a day just seven months ago, has eased after the nation’s leaders revamped their policies and dramatically ramped up their vaccination drive.</p> <p>Now, as India celebrates the delivery of its <a href="#">one billionth dose</a>, a feat that until recently seemed improbable, public health experts are sounding a new warning: The turnaround is losing steam.</p> <p>Vaccinations are slowing down. As the temperature dips amid India’s most important festival season, people are crowding markets and hosting unmasked friends and family indoors. And the government is telling vaccination campaign volunteers like Namanjaya Khobragade that they are no longer needed.</p> <p>“Now is not the time to let our guard down,” said Ms. Khobragade, a coordinator for a health nonprofit in the eastern state of Jharkhand. “Many people have taken just the first vaccine. We cannot leave them like this. We need to increase the intensity.”</p> <p>India’s progress represents a significant step toward ending the crisis globally and stands as an important political win for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose government came under heavy criticism for failing to prepare for a devastating second wave that struck earlier this year. After the virus killed tens of thousands of people, India’s government threw money at boosting vaccine production, stopped vaccine exports and tossed out <a href="#">cumbersome rules</a> that had made it hard for state governments to get doses and for people to sign up for shots.</p> <p>By official figures, daily infections have plunged to about 12,000 per day, from about 42,000 four months ago. Deaths, too, have fallen by half, to about 400 per day.</p> <p>Experts consider India’s statistics on infections and deaths to be <a href="#">a gross undercount</a>. Still, normal life has returned in many parts of the country. Shopping malls are crowded, roads are full of traffic, and children who have been out of school since March 2020 finally returned to classrooms this month.</p> <p>But with only one-quarter of its vast population fully vaccinated, India remains deeply vulnerable. The possibility that a dangerous variant will emerge remains a concern.</p> <p>The central government appears to acknowledge that India has lost a step. Shortly after returning from the climate conference in Scotland, Mr. Modi led a meeting focused on parts of the country where fewer than half the residents are fully vaccinated.</p>



“Now we are preparing to take the vaccination campaign to each household,” he said in a statement, adding that officials would take a “knock on every door” approach toward “every household lacking the security net of a double dose of vaccine.”

Complacency contributed to the devastation of the second wave. In January, with India reporting case numbers comparable to this fall’s, Mr. Modi [declared victory](#) over the coronavirus. The government, encouraged by [a flawed mathematical model](#) that showed the pandemic had all but ended in India, prioritized vaccines for health care workers and older people with conditions that made them more likely to die from Covid-19.

For everybody else, the government moved more slowly. The Serum Institute of India, the world’s largest vaccine maker, set aside 100 million doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford University vaccine for its home country [in January](#). That month, Mr. Modi’s government bought just 11 million doses. It exported more than five times that number as far afield as the Caribbean.

“There was an unfortunate sense of overconfidence that the pandemic had ended with India,” said Dr. K. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India.

Then the second wave hit. At its peak in May, India was reporting more than 400,000 new cases each day. Demand for vaccines skyrocketed. To cope, Mr. Modi’s government introduced a vaccine pricing system intended to direct doses to those with the greatest need. Instead, cities fought over limited supplies and corporations stockpiled, [worsening the shortages](#).

By June, five months into the national vaccination campaign, just over 3 percent of the population had been inoculated.

As criticism from opposition parties grew, Mr. Modi centralized the procurement and distribution of vaccines. India’s inoculation program hit its stride, making use of the systems and know-how that had made vaccine campaigns against polio and other diseases such a success.

He shelled out billions of dollars — the government has not disclosed the precise amount — from India’s budget for an advance payment deal that allowed the Serum Institute to ramp up production to 220 million doses per month. It struck a similar deal with another Indian vaccine maker, Bharat Biotech.

With supplies shored up, Mr. Modi’s government enlisted an army of volunteers, including paramilitary forces, teachers and religious leaders, to help get shots into arms.

Nonprofit aid groups and charities with long histories of supporting public health campaigns were brought in to help organize the push. Priests and clerics were dispatched to reassure hesitant villagers.

In one village in the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh, residents agreed to be vaccinated only after [officials trekked](#) hours up a mountain to consult local deities. Elsewhere, in India’s remote northeast, villagers received vaccine [doses by drone](#).

The Serum Institute now says the government has cumulatively purchased one billion doses. More than three out of four adults have received at least one shot. Mr. Modi’s government is now so confident that it will fully vaccinate all adults, some 900 million people, by the end of the year that it has lifted its eight-month [ban on vaccine exports](#).

At a meeting of the world’s largest economies in Rome last month, Mr. Modi said that India would be able to supply five billion doses toward the global vaccination effort next year.

That may be good news for the world, but at home, health experts warn that the government needs to stay vigilant. Health workers are struggling to persuade millions of people to return for a second dose.

The vaccination rate has fallen sharply from its peak on Mr. Modi's birthday in September, when 25 million doses were administered, and now totals about three million per day. India still has to administer more than 700 million shots to reach its year-end goal, which at current rates looks increasingly unlikely unless India can repeat Mr. Modi's birthday feat a few more times.

"There is hesitancy for going for the second dose because the community thinks, 'Do we really need it now?'" said Dr. Jacob John, a public health physician in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The makeshift groups the government tapped to drive the vaccine push, he added, weren't built for a sustained campaign.

Delays could open opportunities for a new variant to strike or for immunity to ebb. Recent serological prevalence surveys, which measure antibodies that form in response to infection or a vaccine, show that some of India's largest cities, including the capital of New Delhi, are reporting upward of 90 percent with antibodies.

"But it's not a uniform distribution across the country," Dr. Reddy said. "You have pockets of vulnerability."

The Indian government seems to know that it has a long way to go. India recently applied for a \$2 billion loan with the Asian Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank to buy doses for some 300 million more people.

Administering a billion doses "is an important milestone," N.K. Arora, the head of India's National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration, wrote in a newspaper op-ed, "but the fact is that there is still a long road to effectively control Covid."

In Jharkhand, Ms. Khobragade, the health worker, said myths remain rampant among some villagers that the vaccine is deadlier than the coronavirus, makes men impotent or — among Muslim and Christian worriers — converts people to Hinduism.

Ms. Khobragade plunged into the vaccine campaign in April, when entire villages were coming down with Covid, and the constant smoke from funeral pyres blackened the skies of New Delhi.

Now, with a major milestone reached, the state government is saying Ms. Khobragade can return to her work on maternal and infant health. It has withdrawn funding and the extra vaccine vans and nursing staff Ms. Khobragade relied upon to reach hesitant villagers.

"There is still huge vaccine hesitancy," she said. "Now is no time to rest."

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HEADLINE	11/08 WSP chief: 'most difficult' challenges
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/olympia/pandemic-created-the-most-difficult-challenges-washington-state-patrol-chief-has-experienced/281-fbe9e263-69a6-4c76-8308-84280d4d1547">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/olympia/pandemic-created-the-most-difficult-challenges-washington-state-patrol-chief-has-experienced/281-fbe9e263-69a6-4c76-8308-84280d4d1547</a>
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. — Since being sworn in as a Washington State Patrol trooper in 1978, now head of the agency, Chief John Batiste said he has not had to deal with anything close to the challenges created by the pandemic.</p> <p>Not the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980, nor the World Trade Organization riots in Seattle in 1999, Batiste said.</p> <p>"This is the most difficult one, no doubt about it," Batiste said.</p> <p>Since the start of the pandemic, Batiste's agency has responded to countless protests and worked with the Washington National Guard keeping the state <a href="#">Capitol in Olympia secure</a>. Detective Trooper <a href="#">Eric Gunderson</a> died from COVID-19 this fall. And last month, the state patrol fired <a href="#">127 employees</a> who failed to</p>

	<p>get vaccinated under the state vaccine mandate. Several of the outgoing troopers made, and recorded, resignation speeches on police radios from their WSP cars.</p> <p>Batiste said it was “very disheartening” for him to see those videos appear on social media.</p> <p>”Because you’re talking about folks, under ordinary circumstances, I have never seen them act out in that way. Clearly, it was a very emotional event for them,” Batiste said.</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies around the country have seen employees more reluctant to get vaccinated than at other public departments.</p> <p>Batiste said that is not surprising.</p> <p>“We’re strong-willed by nature. We generally hire folks who are very independent because they have to be, to a degree. To run into danger, you have to have a certain possibility to do that, so they’re used to being confronted with dangerous situations,” Batiste said.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 DOH milestone: 10M doses Covid vaccine</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/10-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-administered-in-washington-state">https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/10-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-administered-in-washington-state</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>The Washington Department of Health (DOH) announced a major milestone Monday in the fight against COVID-19, which has killed nearly 9,000 people statewide since the beginning of the pandemic.</p> <p>State health workers have administered 10 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, the department said Monday.</p> <p>“Giving out 10 million doses of life-saving vaccine is something we should all be proud of here in Washington,” said Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health. “Knowing that younger kids can now be protected from the worst outcomes of this virus is an incredible relief, not just for parents and families, but for everyone. The more people vaccinated, the more community protection we have, and that’s good for us all.”</p> <p>Officials said 79.1 percent of the people older than 12 statewide has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, with 73.1 percent being considered fully vaccinated.</p> <p>Last week the state authorized Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children 5-11 years, opening the way for more of the population to be inoculated against the virus.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 BLM protesters march in Renton</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/blm-protesters-march-in-renton-over-racial-profiling-allegations">https://komonews.com/news/local/blm-protesters-march-in-renton-over-racial-profiling-allegations</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>RENTON, Wash. — A man said he was singled out and racially profiled by the security guards at the building where he works.</p> <p>The property managers said they were just trying to stop a domestic violence suspect from getting inside and it was all a case of mistaken identity.</p> <p>The issue led to a protest and march Monday as Black Lives Matter demonstrators called for an end to bigotry and racial hatred.</p> <p>John Houston had been working at the Evergreen Building as a drug and alcohol counselor for troubled youth for about six months when one day in late August he was stopped and questioned before being</p>



allowed to enter. Houston said it felt dehumanizing to stand there and watch as other people were simply allowed to pass through the lobby.

“I was told that I had a domestic violence warrant and that they were calling the police,” Houston said.

The incident between Houston and the security team was captured on an overhead camera. One of the guards asked Houston for his name and what business he had there. Houston can be heard getting upset and refusing to cooperate.

“I’m not going to answer that for you because I think you’re harassing me,” Houston said.

Building management said security guards were on heightened alert over a domestic violence suspect who was trying to enter the building. The suspect was Black and used a cane Houston is also Black and uses a cane because he is legally blind.

Although initially Houston would not identify himself or which office he worked in he later did tell them. However, by then police had already been called.

When officers arrived the security guards tried to explain the mistake. They handed the photo of the DV suspect to one of the officers, who then compared it to Houston.

"OK well there's a good resemblance to you, OK," the officer can be heard saying on the surveillance recording. "Obviously it's not you."

Houston and the demonstrators who joined him said a teachable moment was missed and people should never be profiled over how they look.

“I have grandchildren,” Houston said. “I have children. If they ever ask me, ‘grandpa what did you do, or dad what did you do,’ I can tell them I stood up. I stood up against the ugliness and the hate.”

Houston still works in the Evergreen Building helping youth overcome their addictions. He said what is needed is more sensitivity and anti-bias training.

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HEADLINE	11/09 Questions remain in Houston tragedy
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/travis-scott-entertainment-business-arts-and-entertainment-concerts-29cddbc5c798a92c1d0fe717cd06f708">https://apnews.com/article/travis-scott-entertainment-business-arts-and-entertainment-concerts-29cddbc5c798a92c1d0fe717cd06f708</a>
GIST	<p>HOUSTON (AP) — When rapper Travis Scott’s sold-out concert in Houston became a deadly scene of panic and danger in the surging crowd, Edgar Acosta began worrying about his son, who wasn’t answering his phone.</p> <p>He called hospitals and police, who told him his son was not on the list of victims from the Astroworld festival. They were wrong: Axel Acosta Avila, 21, was among the eight people who died Friday night at the outdoor festival that was attended by some 50,000 people and <a href="#">is now the focus of a criminal investigation</a>.</p> <p>On Monday, authorities released the names of the dead as they continued looking into what went wrong when a crush of fans pressed forward after <a href="#">Scott took the stage</a>. Houston’s police chief said Monday he had met with Scott before the rapper’s performance on Friday about safety concerns but did not elaborate about what, specifically, concerned him.</p> <p>“They told me, Mr. Acosta, your son is not on the list so you don’t have to worry about anything. He’s not on the list of dead people or injured people” said Edgar Acosta, whose family is among those suing organizers of the festival.</p>

“I told them, ‘Well, he didn’t spend the night at his hotel, so I’m worried about him.’”

Houston police and fire department investigators have said they would review video taken by concert promoter Live Nation, as well as dozens of clips from people at the show that were widely shared on social media. Investigators also planned to speak with Live Nation representatives, Scott and concertgoers.

Live Nation said in a statement Monday that it has provided authorities with all footage from surveillance cameras at the festival, and that it had paused removing equipment at the request of investigators who were walking the grounds. The promoter said full refunds would be offered to all attendees.

Scott’s scheduled appearance at the Day N Vegas Festival in Las Vegas this weekend was canceled, according to a Scott representative who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter.

Scott, who founded the Astroworld festival, said he would cover funeral costs for the victims. The dead were between the ages of 14 and 27 and were from Texas, Illinois and Washington, according to Harris County authorities. [They included high schoolers](#), an aspiring Border Patrol agent and a computer science student.

Over 300 people were treated at a field hospital on site and at least 13 others were hospitalized. Houston Police Chief Troy Finner said his meeting with Scott before the show included the rapper’s head of a security. But Finner did not go into detail about their conversation in a statement released by the police department.

“I asked Travis Scott and his team to work with HPD for all events over the weekend and to be mindful of his team’s social media messaging on any scheduled events,” Finner said. “The meeting was brief and respectful, and a chance for me to share my public safety concerns as Chief of Police.”

Investigators were also interviewing witnesses and planned to examine the design of safety barriers and the use of crowd control at the event.

“It’s not the crowd’s fault at all, because there was no way you could even move, it was just like a mass loss of control,” said 19-year-old festivalgoer Ben Castro. He returned to the venue Monday to leave flowers at a makeshift memorial that included notes, T-shirts and candles. He said he didn’t know anyone had died until the next day.

Medical examiners have still not released the causes of death, which could take several weeks, said Michele Arnold, a spokeswoman for the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

Contemporary Services Corp., headquartered in Los Angeles, was responsible for security staff at the festival, according to county records in Texas. The company describes itself online as being “recognized worldwide as the pioneer, expert and only employee owned company in the crowd management field.” Company representatives have not responded to emails and phone messages seeking comment.

Astroworld’s organizers had laid out security and emergency medical response protocols in festival plans filed with Harris County. A 56-page operations plan, obtained by AP, states “the potential for multiple alcohol/drug related incidents, possible evacuation needs, and the ever-present threat of a mass casualty situation are identified as key concerns.”

The plan instructs staff to “notify Event Control of a suspected deceased victim utilizing the code ‘Smurf’.” It goes on to say, “never use the term ‘dead’ or ‘deceased’ over the radio.” It’s not clear whether the protocol was followed.

None of the people listed in charge of managing Astroworld’s security and operations have responded to requests for comment.

	There is a long history of similar catastrophes at concerts, as well as sporting and religious events. In 1979, 11 people were killed as thousands of fans tried to get into Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum <a href="#">to see a concert by The Who</a> . Other <a href="#">crowd catastrophes</a> include the deaths of 97 people at a soccer match in Hillsborough Stadium in 1989 in Sheffield, England, and numerous disasters connected with the annual hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Seattle regains revenue footing</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2021/11/seattle-regains-its-revenue-footing-as-a-new-mayor-is-set-to-take-office/">https://www.capitolhillseattle.com/2021/11/seattle-regains-its-revenue-footing-as-a-new-mayor-is-set-to-take-office/</a>
GIST	<p>When <b>Bruce Harrell</b> takes office early next year as <b>Mayor of Seattle</b>, the city budget he inherits from his predecessor <b>Jenny Durkan</b> is one largely recovered from the revenue tumult of the past two years and one very similar to the budget Harrell saw through to completion before leaving office as Council President at the end of 2019. Federal stimulus and the new JumpStart payroll tax, which hasn't actually begun to be collected yet, largely account for that quick rebound.</p> <p><b>UPDATE 11/8/2021 11:33 AM:</b> As yet another reminder that recovery won't be a smooth ride, the Seattle City Council got news Monday morning that they'll have about \$20 million less than expected to work with in 2022. Budget chair <b>Teresa Mosqueda</b> shared the update in the council's morning briefing session and said the downgraded revenue estimate will need to be handled in the balancing package due later this week.</p> <p>Still, overall stronger revenue estimates mean the city departments are largely getting back to normal: <b>Seattle Parks and Recreation</b>, for example, will be reallocating money back to redeveloping new sites for future parks, and the <b>Seattle Public Library</b> will be looking to add longer operating hours that were promised to voters as part of the last library levy in 2019.</p> <p>As Mayor-elect Harrell promises to focus on bolstering the city's police force, the proposed budget for the <b>Seattle Police Department</b> is essentially flat compared to 2021, despite a big shift of personnel out of the department: Parking Enforcement Officers have been shifted to the Seattle Department of Transportation and 911 operators will be working under the new <b>Community Safety and Communications Center (CSCC)</b>.</p> <p>Mayor Durkan proposed adding a net of 35 new police officers in next year's budget, something that may end up being modified by the time the budget is adopted by the City Council. Her budget also allocated money toward hiring bonuses, a long-time goal that has been stymied by the council, and even went so far as to use her emergency powers to get those bonuses rolling sooner.</p> <p>Next year also marks the transition of all of the City's homelessness service contracts away from its direct control, to the <b>King County Regional Homelessness Authority</b>. With that transfer, the City loses its ability to dictate that money for homelessness services in Seattle is spent in exactly the way it wants. The KCRHA is hoping to receive funding to set up a new shelter downtown for people living unsheltered who suffer from behavioral issues. That would work in tandem with Mayor-elect Harrell's pledge to build 2,000 units of housing in his first year in office, which could include shelter beds.</p> <p>In terms of city streets, the budget for the <b>Seattle Department of Transportation's</b> budget is fairly stable, with big-ticket projects like the <b>RapidRide G</b> line and the repair of the West Seattle bridge, scheduled to reopen in mid-2022, taking center stage. As several members of the City Council seek to boost the department's spending on bridge maintenance citywide, the department is being allocated an additional \$5.2 million that should allow it to complete some key projects.</p> <p>Durkan's budget would also restart work on the <b>Center City Connector</b> streetcar project, which has been on ice since 2018. The long-planned streetcar would link the First Hill Streetcar to the South Lake Union line in a dedicated lane along 1st Ave. After scrutinizing the project, Durkan announced her support for completing the project but the next mayor will need to prioritize finding the full funding for the project,</p>

which was last estimated to be around \$286 million. Several councilmembers have proposed diverting the money to restart the project for other uses.

Some of the high profile amendments proposed by councilmembers include:

- **Public bathrooms:** Another try to add public restrooms downtown. \$2 million proposed by Councilmember Tammy Morales would add four public restrooms in areas where high concentrations of people are living unhoused, which could include areas close to or within Capitol Hill.
- **A plan to phase out gas leaf blowers:** A study proposed by Councilmember Alex Pedersen would request Seattle Parks work with other departments to develop a plan to phase out gas leaf blowers at city properties and study a buy-back program for privately owned gas leaf blowers.
- **Accelerating conversion of homes away from heating oil:** Around 1,000 homes could be converted from oil heat to electric heat pumps with an additional \$13 million to the program proposed by D3 Councilmember Kshama Sawant.
- **Additional funding to address mental health via a Mobile Crisis Team:** This amendment sponsored by Councilmembers Strauss, Herbold, and Lewis would expand the existing team of mental health professionals who act as first responders as an alternative to armed police.
- **Funding to fully develop a street dining pilot in Ballard along Ballard Ave NW:** Councilmember Dan Strauss, sponsoring this amendment, is hopeful that permanent Ballard Ave street dining improvements can become a model for the rest of the city to follow, and could influence the design of future Capitol Hill street dining spaces like 11th Avenue in front of Chophouse Row.
- **'Home Zones':** Additional funding for the Seattle Department of Transportation to roll out "home zones" in neighborhoods around the city that are lacking separated sidewalks. Already being piloted in some neighborhoods, these coordinated traffic calming strategies act a lot like the Stay Healthy Streets along E Columbia Street and 22nd Ave.

At the end of this week, we'll know which amendments survived after the City Council hears from the public in a dedicated public hearing Wednesday night starting at 5:30 PM. They are expected to formally vote on the entire budget on the Monday before Thanksgiving.

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HEADLINE	11/08 OIG auditor certified cases w/out review?
SOURCE	<a href="https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/11/08/oig-auditor-certified-cases-without-reviewing-evidence-investigation-reveals/#more-78269">https://southseattleemerald.com/2021/11/08/oig-auditor-certified-cases-without-reviewing-evidence-investigation-reveals/#more-78269</a>
GIST	<p>Based on a preliminary internal quality control investigation conducted in July 2021, it appears that Office of Inspector General (OIG) auditor Anthony Finnell failed to thoroughly review more than 30 protest case findings issued by the Office of Police Accountability (OPA), before issuing either full certifications or approving cases as "Expedited" — cases in which the OPA determines that findings can be issued mainly on intake investigations. These are far from the only cases he has certified that fellow staffers have raised concerns over and represent just a sampling of the cases he has certified. Finnell also serves as <a href="#">vice president on the Board</a> of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE).</p> <p>The preliminary investigation found that Finnell appears to have only sporadically reviewed the Seattle Police Department (SPD) officers' body-worn video (BWV) associated with the cases for which it was available. In some cases, Finnell appears to have opened files containing tens of pages of evidence, opened a couple of documents, and certified the cases just minutes later — but in other cases, he appears to have fully certified them without opening any of the case files at all, despite the fact that fully certifying a case means confirming that it is timely, thorough, and objective.</p> <p>In some of these cases, Finnell never even opened the Report of Investigation (ROI) — the very document upon which the OPA bases its investigatory findings, as its purpose is to represent the totality of available evidence the OPA investigator has examined and from which they have drawn conclusions.</p>

The OIG's concern over Finnell's performance is one of the issues a former OIG investigations supervisor — the same one who conducted the preliminary investigation — highlighted at the bottom of page three in their [ethics complaint](#), which the *Emerald* [wrote about](#) in August. However, in addition to the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) declining to investigate the matter, the *Emerald* has learned that the City's Human Resources (HR) department has similarly declined to investigate — a fact that appears not to have been shared with the Community Police Commission (CPC), based on [CPC members' comments](#) regarding the ethics complaint at its most recent meeting on Nov. 3. The CPC [appears to have been similarly kept out of the loop](#) with regard to the Ethics and Elections decision until the *Emerald* emailed the CPC, Federal Monitor Antonio Oftelie, and SEEC with questions about the matter.

Based on the former investigations supervisor's review, it appears that the OIG reached out with the intent to hire investigatory review firm OIR Group, headed up by Mike Gennaco, to conduct an official audit of OIG's casework. Deputy Inspector General Amy Tsai's emails about hiring the firm appear to show that she was not only in a rush to do so but also that she appears to have wanted the former investigations supervisor to take leadership of the investigation into Finnell's performance, despite the fact that she and Inspector General Lisa Judge were the primary movers of said investigation. It is immediately unclear whether the OIG officially hired the firm.

Based on the documents the *Emerald* obtained, the preliminary investigation the former investigations supervisor conducted was ordered by Judge after OIG staff brought it to both Judge's and Tsai's attention in May 2021 that there was, according to a July 8, 2021, memo from Tsai to Judge, a "potential issue" with Finnell's investigations.

In this memo, Tsai states that she and the former investigations supervisor had begun discussing how to better institute quality control and address such issues, while Judge had told the former investigations supervisor to conduct a preliminary review of some of Finnell's cases. Tsai's memo states that the former investigations supervisor conducted the audit July 4–5 and that the work took six hours to complete.

"[The former investigations supervisor] individually examined the audit log in IAPro (the OPA case management system) and the audit log in SPD's body-worn video repository of record, evidence.com for number and type of documents accessed and certification outcomes," Tsai's memo reads. "This initial examination did not include a determination of the sufficiency of OPA's investigation for OIG certification, and it did not include a determination of the sufficiency of AF's certification review work."

This initial examination focused on a sampling of 34 protest cases that Finnell reviewed and certified. In all 34 cases, Finnell issued full certifications and approved 10 of those as Expedited. Tsai's memo states that it did not appear as though Finnell requested any additional investigation for these cases and that, based on the IAPro audit log and another BWV collection database, Evidence.com, Finnell also did not view any of the available BWV in 22 cases for which it was available.

The concerns that kicked off this preliminary investigation are recorded in a brief case review document dated May 20, 2021, which outlines the different cases that Finnell reviewed in such a way that raised red flags for fellow OIG staffers. While the *Emerald* cannot, due to privacy concerns, share the document, the *Emerald* will note in this article several of Finnell's case reviews, including those that appeared to most concern the former investigations supervisor who created the document.

In one instance, the May 2021 document reads, OIG staff discovered that Finnell viewed just 12 of the 35 files — including a 21-page ROI — associated with OPA case [2020OPA-0036](#), in which an SPD officer allegedly "engaged in criminal activity by illegally purchasing prescription oxycodone pain pills on at least ten separate occasions starting in or about October 2019 through the present. The illegal transactions have reportedly taken place at Southcenter Mall, a private residence in Spanaway, and possibly other locations in King or Pierce County."



The document states that Finnell opened the first file at 9:28 a.m. and certified the case at 9:50 a.m. According to the Case Closed Summary (CCS), the OPA sustained all allegations against the officer, but the officer chose to retire in lieu of termination.

In another case, [2020OPA-0056](#), while SPD's Force Investigations Team (FIT) was reviewing a use of force that involved potential misconduct, it was discovered that one of the involved officers, Officer Hunt, "covered his BWV with his hand at the 09:19:16Z timestamp. At the 9:46:56Z timestamp Officer Hunt approaches Officer Prettyman. As he approaches, Officer Hunt again covers his BWV while engaging in a whispered conversation with Officer Prettyman."

The document states that of the eight files relevant to the case, Finnell reviewed just two of them. It also outlines what it calls "Special Considerations" — namely that Finnell "viewed 1 Ofc [Officer] BWV out of 4, Interview of NE [Named Employee] not viewed, ROI viewed just one minute before certification."

The OPA removed allegations of unprofessional conduct regarding discretion from the complaint against the involved officers and sustained allegations of improper body-worn video recording procedure. One officer resigned and moved to a different law enforcement agency before the OPA had finished its investigation (and before the OPA could interview him or any discipline could be imposed), while the other officer received a written reprimand.

In yet another case, Finnell did not review any of the officer interviews associated with the case at all. In this case, [2020OPA-0197](#), the complainant alleged that SPD officers took no action, despite witnessing someone violating a no-contact order.

Of the more than 18 evidence files associated with this case, Finnell viewed just four. None of them were officer interviews, despite the complainant having named four officers in the initial complaint. According to the document, Finnell opened the first file at 12:30 p.m. Just 24 minutes later, he fully certified the case. There is no publicly available CCS for this case. The Complaint Tracker states that, as of March 3, 2021, "[t]he investigation is complete.

"The OPA Director has recommended that one or more of the allegations associated with the complaint be Sustained," the Complaint Tracker reads. "A discipline meeting has been scheduled in which OPA's investigation, allegations, and recommended discipline will be discussed. The Chief of Police will make the final decision on the findings (Sustained or Not Sustained) and will determine the discipline to be imposed. This process may take 1-3 months to finalize. For more information on the meaning of Sustained or Not Sustained allegations, please visit the 'Complaint Process' page of OPA's website."

The former investigations supervisor also appears to have been particularly concerned about four consecutive cases — 2020OPA-0376, 2020OPA-0377, 2020OPA-0378, and 2020OPA-0379 — primarily because Finnell did not open the ROIs for any of these cases, in addition to other issues.

Of the more than 30 files associated with [2020OPA-0376](#), Finnell viewed just six files. This case's CCS is not yet available.

In [2020OPA-0377](#), Finnell viewed just a third of the at least 15 files associated with the case. None of those were the involved officers' or witness officers' interviews. In this case, the OPA sustained no allegations against the involved officer for allegedly firing a 40mm launcher with a CS grenade in it at a person who had identified themselves as a member of the press or for alleged failure to record BWV.

Finnell opened nine of more than 15 files associated with [2020OPA-0378](#) and certified the case in just 12 minutes. The OPA sustained both allegations against the officer, suspending them for one day without pay for sending a profane email to Seattle City Councilmembers.

Finally, he opened only three of the nine files available in [2020OPA-0379](#). He certified the case 22 minutes after opening the first file. The OPA did not sustain allegations against an officer for allegedly firing a 40mm "less lethal" launcher at protesters.



The May 2021 document also notes the short turnaround time for some of the cases.

In [2020OPA-0378](#), Finnell certified the case in 12 minutes, despite there being more than 15 evidence files, with Finnell supposedly reviewing nine of those files in that time. The OPA sustained the allegation against the officer, and the officer was suspended for one day without pay.

In [2020OPA-0289](#) — a case in which the OIG requested additional investigation, resulting in more than 15 evidence files, a 15-page ROI, and six pages' worth of additional requested investigation — Finnell certified the case in just nine minutes. This latter recorded concern notes that, despite this requested additional investigation, “none of the requested attachments were viewed and no correspondence mentioned was reviewed, case certified in less than 10 minutes.”

The OPA sustained the allegations against two officers. One resigned and refused to participate in the investigation, the CCS reads. The other received a written reprimand.

For the OIG's official July 2021 preliminary investigation, Judge directed the former investigations supervisor to focus solely on protest cases, “as these are cases of likely public concern and [the investigations supervisor] had already begun compiling case information for a public disclosure request for all OIG protest casework,” Tsai's July 8 memo reads.

The preliminary investigation document found that of the 34 cases, Finnell concurred with OPA investigators' findings and decisions 100% of the time.

As with the cases of concern recorded in the May 2021 document, the *Emerald* will highlight just a handful.

In one investigation that the OPA wanted to be Expedited — which Finnell approved — the complainant alleged that the officer pointed a gun at a protester. In this case, [2020OPA-0402](#), Finnell opened the first file at 7:45 a.m. That file was the complaint. At 7:46 a.m., Finnell opened the ROI. He then routed the case back to the OPA at 7:47 a.m., without opening any evidence files or any of the nine photos and videos of the incident from the community and without reviewing any of the BWV available.

In this case, the OPA sustained no allegations against the officer.

In another Expedited investigation, [2020OPA-0438](#), three officers faced serious allegations, including biased policing and lack of probable cause for arrest. Not only did Finnell open none of the files associated with the complaint — including the ROI — he also did not view any of the five BWV recordings associated with the complaint. He opened the complaint at 2:32 p.m. and routed it to the OPA — fully certified — just two minutes later, at 2:34 p.m.

In this case, the OPA sustained no allegations against any of the three officers.

In case [2020OPA-0427](#) — yet another Expedited investigation into a demonstration complaint — two officers faced allegations of excessive use of force (when attempting to confiscate umbrellas), use of profanity, and failure to properly identify themselves. According to the document, Finnell approved the Expedited investigation classification without viewing any of the files — including, again, the ROI — or any of the BWV available.

The OPA sustained none of the allegations against the involved officers.

Finally, in [2020OPA-0430](#), the complainant alleged that officers targeted him with both a CS gas canister and a 40mm blue-tipped round ([a sponge-tipped “less lethal” weapon](#)) for no reason and that the police targeted other protesters with blast balls, CS gas, and rubber bullets. The complainant also said that a piece of blast ball hit him in the face. He said that he was peacefully protesting and that he did not hear any

orders to disperse. The OPA sustained no allegations in this case, deeming them “inconclusive” because the complaint allegedly involved unknown employees.

In this case, the OIG auditor found that Finnell viewed the first file in this case at 11:24 a.m., and went on to fully certify the case at 11:37 a.m. But not only did Finnell view no evidence, aside from the ROI and the complaint intake document, he also did not view any of the more than 15 BWV files available and referenced in the ROI.

Notably, the OPA investigator claimed that they could not clearly see the employees in question or identify the complainant from the latter’s description of himself in any of the at least 15 BWV files available. This claim would serve as the crux of the OPA’s decision not to sustain any allegations due to inconclusive evidence.

Though Tsai’s official memo regarding Finnell’s performance and the internal investigation clearly indicate that she and Judge were the ones who decided to launch an investigation, Tsai’s emails to the former investigations supervisor whom Judge set to the task of performing the preliminary investigation appear to indicate that Tsai wanted to distance herself from said investigation.

Tsai emailed the former investigations supervisor after hours on July 23, 2021, saying that “[w]e need to get started” on the contract with OIR Group, the investigatory firm headed by Mike Gennaco.

“As the unit supervisor you will be leading this effort, but I will be actively involved and assist when I can, so please keep me on copy,” Tsai writes in this email, on which Judge and OIG operations manager Alexandra McGehee are copied. “Lisa wants this work started ASAP, but I am out next week so you will likely have the first conversation without me. Lisa will want to be present for that meeting. If I happen to be available at the time you schedule I might tune in. Please reach out to Gennaco and set up a meeting time to begin discussing and scoping the work.

“I think it is advisable to set up regular check-ins just like SER has a weekly check-in, but ultimately it’s up to you to manage and decide. Please also be working on our game plan for giving him access to materials given his non-CJIS status. We may need a data-sharing agreement,” Tsai continues, before suggesting that two of the former investigations supervisor’s colleagues at OIG could show them a similar example of such agreements.

Tsai then appears to shift the responsibility of getting together the necessary documents to hire OIR Group onto the former investigations supervisor, despite an apparently very limited time frame, and suggests that hiring OIR Group is already a done deal: “We are expecting his final report within the next two months, so there is not a big window and this work should start as quickly as possible.”

Tsai says in her email that she is copying the former investigations supervisor’s colleague “because it is possible she could assist you with this project, since she has a pretty good sense of the history and is CJIS certified. I believe she may also have an IAPro account.” However, Tsai notes, at the time, this colleague also had a two-week vacation coming up, “so if you need her assistance, this next week is the largest window of opportunity.”

The former investigations supervisor replies in a Monday, July 26 email, sent just before 4:30 p.m., suggesting that before bringing in OIR Group, she and Tsai spend whatever free time Tsai has that day discussing both the scope of the investigatory review (which the former investigations supervisor refers to as “the project”) and the data-sharing agreement, which the former investigations supervisor says is dependent upon the scope of the project.

“Gennaco not having IA Pro access is going to make it extremely difficult for him to review IA Pro case files. This will be a massive logistical effort that should be discussed and figured out prior to Gennaco beginning his work (it has to be figured out before he can begin working anyway),” the former investigations supervisor writes.

Tsai writes back just after 6 p.m. the same day: “These are good questions — that’s why it will be important to have me or Lisa at the meeting. I think you were on our call with Gennaco – the end result of which was to agree to do some prep work (with him) that includes scoping and answering the questions you pose below. If we go in with an idea of what we want that’s great, but we will also be discussing and refining it with [Gennaco].”

The former investigations supervisor writes back that they were not on the call with Gennaco. Moreover, it appears as though the former investigations supervisor was caught unawares regarding the idea that they would be leading the rush to hire Gennaco.

On Sunday, July 18, Tsai had requested that employees, including the former investigations supervisor, write to her with “issues of concern as they occur,” including that “[a]ll team leads send me (or update a tracker) every time staff is asked to work after hours or on weekends and in what amount.”

The former investigations supervisor appears to have deemed Tsai’s July 23 after-hours email to be such a case and says as much in a July 26 email sent at 9:37 p.m., just a few hours after the short exchange about Gennaco and OIR Group.

The former investigations supervisor lists off three tasks Tsai appears to have designated as the investigations supervisor’s job in her after-hours email. The former investigations supervisor writes that, before Tsai’s after-hours July 23 email, not only were they “previously unaware any of these items would be happening this week” but that they were “completely unaware I would be heading up the Gennaco project.”

Tsai writes back to the former investigations supervisor just after 10 p.m. on July 26. In addressing the former investigations supervisor’s concerns regarding hiring OIR Group, Tsai does not address the apparent suggestion that she and Judge have not kept the former investigations supervisor in the loop and that they are looking to shift the responsibility of the project onto the former investigations supervisor. Instead, Tsai says that “we’re going to need you to have an active role as the supervisor of the unit, but we can discuss how better to identify what are official ‘projects’ that fall within your wheelhouse as the unit supervisor, versus things that management might lead instead.”

“My perspective on that is that matters affecting the unit would default to you – I rarely involve myself in the day-to-day projects of the units because it just isn’t feasible,” she continues, appearing to suggest that serious and apparently ongoing concerns regarding Finnell’s professional performance as an auditor — concerns that OIG leadership felt warranted hiring an outside investigation team as soon as possible — falls into the “day-to-day projects” category of the oversight entity’s auditing team and was specifically the former investigations supervisor’s responsibility.

“But the Gennaco thing certainly has complexities to it so I appreciate the confusion and it’s worth discussing further how the project should be managed,” Tsai continues, appearing to indicate that her and Judge’s suggested failure to keep the former investigations supervisor in the loop or continue to lead an investigation Judge and Tsai herself had launched was a failing on the former investigations supervisor’s part. “Regardless, one thing that may help you to anticipate when these stray requests may materialize is to recognize that it is a known priority with a September due date, so the work has to start. If no one has started it, then it can also be extremely helpful to have you as the unit supervisor flag and raise the question. I realize that’s just an ideal that isn’t always going to be realistic with all the other things going on—particularly given the week you are having—so I only mention it as one way to anticipate the lay of the land.”

The *Emerald* reached out to OIG for comment on Nov. 2. Judge responded to the *Emerald*’s questions in a short email on Nov. 4.

“I take the responsibility and authority vested in OIG to provide OPA oversight very seriously and have high expectations for my employees who conduct this critical function,” Judge wrote. “We are a fairly new office and have been working diligently to create our internal processes for OPA review, and determine

how we provide internal quality control. The issues you have asked about are currently under review by an independent third party. Beyond that, I am not able to comment on pending investigations or personnel matters.”

As of this writing, almost four months after Tsai’s July 23 email referencing a two-month timeframe for a final report on the matter, it is unclear where the internal investigation stands and whether OIG ended up bringing Gennaco and OIR Group on board. It is also unclear whether Finnell continues to audit OPA investigations. Though the *Emerald* followed up with Judge to confirm whether Gennaco and his agency are the ones reviewing the case and asked whether this review was simply that — a review — or a proper investigation, Judge did not reply.

The *Emerald* also asked again whether Finnell is still auditing cases or if he was auditing cases as of the *Emerald*’s original Nov. 2 email. Judge did not reply.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, neither HR nor SEEC will be investigating the [former investigations supervisor’s ethics complaint](#), which contains the issue of Finnell certifying OPA cases without comprehensively reviewing evidence, as well as several other serious allegations.

HR’s Investigations Unit Dir. Steve Zwerin said in a Sept. 10 email that, after reviewing the statement the former investigations supervisor gave in addition to the resignation letter they provided, “[w]hile I empathize with your feelings about your experiences, the allegations you described did not involve harassment or discrimination. Therefore, I did not find sufficient facts to suggest that there may have been a violation of the City of Seattle’s Personnel Rule 1.1.

“Nonetheless, your discussion with her [Rochelle Brown, an HR employee] revealed that you have concerns about possible misconduct by your supervisor,” Zwerin continued. “Because your concerns are outside the scope of the HRIU’s authority, I recommend that you contact EAP [Employee Assistance Program] or the Office of Employee Ombud if you would like to discuss your concerns and the impact they are having on you.”

Zwerin here fails to note that because the former investigations supervisor no longer works with the City, [they are ineligible to bring a complaint to the City Ombuds](#), and the office is not an investigatory one. [This is also true of EAP](#) — not to mention the fact that EAP is an emotional well-being and psychological support system for employees and is also not an investigatory office. As with SEEC Executive Dir. Wayne Barnett, it appears that Zwerin, too, is treating this former investigations supervisor like a disgruntled employee, rather than a whistleblower with what appear to be legitimate concerns.

Zwerin continues, briefly outlining steps that, once again, it appears only employees may take.

“As also discussed in your meeting with Rochelle, any involvement in the HRIU process, whether as a reporter or a witness, is protected under City of Seattle policy. No adverse employment action may be taken against anyone in retaliation for making a good faith complaint,” Zwerin writes. “The same holds true for those assisting in or participating in the investigation. If you experience or witness what you believe is retaliation because of participation in this process, you are strongly encouraged to promptly report it to any of the following: your management; your department Human Resources; the HRIU; or the Office of the Employee Ombud. You may also ask the person to stop the behavior that you believe is retaliatory if you feel comfortable doing so. If you would like more information about your rights regarding the possible harassment or discrimination, here is a link: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws-guidance-0>”

The *Emerald* reached out to both HR and the CPC for comment on this story on Nov. 5.

Zwerin told the *Emerald* in an email that HR’s investigations unit “seeks to resolve employee concerns about harassment and discrimination.

“Our unit conducts neutral, thorough, and timely investigations throughout all executive branch departments. We are a fundamental resource for employees by building trust and fairness through our investigations,” Zwerin wrote in his email.

He went on to say that the unit conducted an intake based on the former investigations supervisor’s complaint “using our usual trauma-informed approach, and did not find sufficient facts to support elevating the allegations to an investigation” because the allegations as described “were not within the scope of harassment or discrimination, nor did they suggest a violation of the City of Seattle’s Personnel Rule 1.1. (PR 1.1 outlines our scope, which is necessarily limited since we have just four investigators for 12,000+ employees.)”

“After we completed the intake, we referred [the former investigations supervisor to potential other City resources, including the Office of Employee Ombud (OEO), the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission, and the Employee Assistance Program. You’re correct that OEO is only for active employees. However, they sometimes intervene when there is a concern about a systemic issue or something else along those lines,” Zwerin told the *Emerald*.

Zwerin did not acknowledge the fact that the City Ombuds does not conduct investigations at all.

Zwerin closed his email to the *Emerald* by saying that the office “would encourage [the former investigations supervisor] to consider the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, Washington State Human Rights Commission, or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission” if they want to pursue some sort of investigative route. However, it is immediately unclear how any of these offices would conduct an investigation into any of the allegations in the ethics complaint, as none appear to fall under their purview.

Zwerin clarified in a follow-up email that he is not intimately familiar with the inner workings of the City’s accountability system and suggested that the *Emerald* reach out to the OIG and the OPA — the two entities that are under fire in the ethics complaint — and the CPC.

The CPC did not respond to the *Emerald*’s queries before publication.

It should also be noted that, as of this writing, no one on the Seattle City Council — including those who frame themselves as wanting to hold the police accountable and create a good, working accountability system — has publicly spoken at length about the ethics complaint and the serious allegations it contains, despite the fact that it is readily and widely available to read, following the *Emerald*’s release of multiple stories about the issues contained within.

Thus, this leaves a central problem still at play — a problem that still has no answer or apparent solution: If there is no clearly established entity at the City level that will investigate serious allegations such as these or others like them in the future then where does that leave whistleblowers like this former investigations supervisor? What does it mean for allegations like the ones described here and in related stories? What does it mean for police accountability and for accountability as a whole?

The *Emerald* will update this story with any responses it receives and will continue to monitor the situation and report on developments.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Police decertification law past misconduct?
SOURCE	<a href="https://crosscut.com/politics/2021/11/wa-lawmakers-want-new-police-decertification-law-apply-past-misconduct">https://crosscut.com/politics/2021/11/wa-lawmakers-want-new-police-decertification-law-apply-past-misconduct</a>
GIST	Washington House Speaker Laurie Jenkins believes Pierce County Sheriff Ed Troyer should resign, rather than ride the wave of a legislative debate on whether new police accountability laws apply to him.

Troyer was criminally charged with lying three months after a new law took hold giving the state Criminal Justice Commission greater authority to revoke troubled police officers' certifications — essentially, the licenses that allow them to work as cops.

Now some lawmakers are dismayed that the state commission won't consider pulling Troyer's license — and that the commission says it can't even consider going after Troyer using its new authority.

Certain legislators, including the prime sponsor of the new law, disagree with that decision. They believed the new law left open the possibility of retroactive punishment of law enforcement officers.

Jenkins said legislators shouldn't even have to engage in this type of debate, because Troyer should simply step down.

"We shouldn't even have to be looking at decertification for Ed Troyer, because he should resign," Jenkins said. "He should resign now, he should have resigned yesterday, he should have resigned a month ago. He should resign."

Criminal charges against Troyer were filed in October, three months after the new law took effect. The alleged criminal behavior happened in January, six months before the law's effective date.

A Crosscut investigation in August highlighted how the state's new police decertification law, Senate Bill 5051, may not apply to past misconduct.

That debate has led some state lawmakers to think clarification might be in order.

"A circumstance like this, where it appears a law enforcement officer lied to law enforcement to get them to come to something, and then made a false accusation against another person — this is exactly the thing that should result in decertification," said Jenkins, a Tacoma Democrat who lives in the county where Troyer is sheriff.

The charges against Troyer stem from a Jan. 27 incident in which he called 911 on a Black newspaper carrier, Sedrick Altheimer, and repeatedly claimed Altheimer had threatened to kill him. Troyer later told Tacoma police that no such threats were made, according to a police report.

Last month, the state Attorney General's Office charged Troyer with one count of false reporting and one count of making a false or misleading statement to a public servant, both of which are misdemeanors.

Jenkins said the right thing for Troyer to do is resign. But if Troyer won't do that, she said, the state should have some additional means of holding him accountable.

"On a moral grounds, this is wrong," Jenkins said of the idea that Troyer could avoid being considered for decertification. If that's how the law is being interpreted, she said, revisiting the law and tweaking it slightly might make sense.

While decertification wouldn't cause Troyer to lose his job, as it would for other cops, the Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance said failing to consider him for decertification at all would be "a massive systems failure for police accountability."

A spokesperson for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, however, said the agency's hands are tied.

"This incident occurred on January 27, 2021. The new law took effect on July 25, 2021. Based on the previous law in which this incident occurred under, WSCJTC cannot pursue certification revocation," spokesperson Megan Saunders wrote in an email.



State Rep. Roger Goodman, the chair of the House Public Safety Committee, said that's because going back in time creates due process concerns. "You need to be on notice as to what the law is before you can be held accountable to it," said Goodman, D-Kirkland.

Other legislators who worked on the decertification bill dispute that interpretation, saying there is nothing in the law that says it can't be applied retroactively in circumstances like this one. "My intent was definitely not to limit it in any way," state Sen. Manka Dhingra, D-Redmond, told Crosscut in August. Dhingra also works as a King County deputy prosecutor.

State Sen. Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, said that in cases where a cop's action clearly crossed a line or violated public trust even under previous laws, he believes the training commission does have the ability to go back and look at those incidents using its new, expanded investigation authority.

He said that's a different situation than the Legislature creating a new criminal offense and punishing people for engaging in it before it was made illegal.

"We intended to leave a small safety valve for really egregious behavior," said Pedersen, who was the prime sponsor of the new law.

That said, Pedersen isn't 100% sure Troyer's conduct would meet the new standards for decertification, or warrant a retroactive review — even though "what he did certainly put the life of the newspaper carrier in danger, and it was reckless," Pedersen said.

The Washington Black Lives Matter Alliance is asking the Attorney General's Office to weigh in on whether the new decertification law can apply to past conduct like Troyer's.

Brionna Aho, a spokesperson for the Attorney General's office, wrote in an email that the agency issues official opinions only in response to formal requests from legislators, agency heads, county prosecutors or statewide elected officials. As of Friday, Aho wrote, no such request had been made for the agency to clarify Senate Bill 5051's retroactivity. The law as written "is silent on the matter," she wrote.

For now, Goodman said his preferred way of increasing accountability for elected sheriffs like Troyer would be to change state law to require them to be certified law enforcement officers. That would mean that, if they lose their certification over misconduct, it would cause them to be removed from office as well. Goodman said he would support such a change in law if it were brought to his committee.

Pedersen, who chairs the Senate Law and Justice Committee, said he also would support such a change.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Physics of crowds: deaths at music festival</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://arstechnica.com/science/2021/11/what-the-physics-of-crowds-can-tell-us-about-the-tragic-deaths-at-astroworld/">https://arstechnica.com/science/2021/11/what-the-physics-of-crowds-can-tell-us-about-the-tragic-deaths-at-astroworld/</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">Astroworld</a> music festival in Houston, Texas, kicked off last Friday, but <a href="#">tragedy struck</a> when Grammy-nominated rapper <a href="#">Travis Scott</a>—who launched the festival in 2018—took to the stage around 9 pm. The enthusiastic crowd surged toward the stage and packed the mosh pit so tightly that people couldn't breathe and began to pass out. There was no space to move, and in the end, at least eight people were killed, and another 25 were hospitalized.</p> <p>Concert promoter Live Nation issued a statement saying it was "heartbroken for those lost and impacted at Astroworld," and the company pledged its full cooperation with local authorities who are investigating. As for Houston native Scott, he <a href="#">pronounced himself</a> "just devastated" in a video posted to his Instagram account last Saturday night and said he had not realized how severe the situation had become from his vantage point onstage. The rapper seems equally reluctant to take the stage in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy: Scott has reportedly canceled a planned set at the hip-hop "Day N Vegas" festival, with <a href="#">sources telling Vulture</a> the rapper is "too distraught to play."</p>

There is still a [great deal we don't know](#) about the conditions at Astroworld and what actually happened that night, pending the results of an official investigation. But deadly crowd surges are a far too common occurrence all over the world. For instance, back in 1979, 11 people were trampled to death during a Who concert in Cincinnati. In 2000, nine people were trampled to death at a Pearl Jam concert during Denmark's Roskilde Festival. And in [April of this year](#) in Meron, Israel, 45 people died in a crush at the Lag B'Omer religious festival, with 150 more injured.

Scientists have been studying crowd dynamics for decades in hopes of developing better strategies to avoid these kinds of tragedies. Typically, they have used computer simulations. Access to archival videos of these kinds of incidents can help, like the footage from the [January 2006 Hajj](#) to Mecca. Over 2 million Sunni Muslims were making their way along an established route to the Saudi city. As the route narrowed at the Jamaraat Bridge, the density of the crowd increased drastically, as people rushed to complete the final symbolic [stoning ritual](#) at Mina before sunset. A stampede ensued, killing 363. (That death toll, while high, pales in comparison to the roughly [2,400 pilgrims killed](#) in another stampede near Mecca [in 2015](#).)

Dirk Helbing and Anders Johansson of the Dresden University of Technology were able to [analyze the video footage](#) and developed a computer algorithm to track the position and velocity of every person in the crowd over a 45-minute period. They identified three distinct phases of the crowd's motion. The crowd initially moved toward the bridge at a steady rate, but as the density increased, there was an abrupt phase transition to a kind of "stop-and-go" motion. This spread like a wave in the same direction the pilgrims were moving. The crowd density continued to increase until another sudden phase transition occurred, whereby pilgrims started moving randomly in all possible directions.

Helbing and Johansson dubbed this phenomenon "crowd turbulence," or a "crowd quake," and they found the critical threshold seemed to be about six people per square meter (10 square feet). "The researchers believe that turbulence may have been brought on by individuals panicking and pushing in all directions to increase their personal space," [Hamish Johnston wrote](#) in *Physics World* in 2007. "This caused violent pressure waves to surge through the crowd, tossing individuals several metres, tearing off clothing and ultimately leading to the trampling of hundreds of pilgrims."

The Jamaraat Bridge scenario is an example of a [bottleneck](#). A similar bottleneck occurred in Eastern Germany during [the 2010 Love Parade](#), a popular music festival. The bottleneck in this case was a 200-meter-long tunnel, through which attendees had to pass in order to get to one of the festival events. But the passageway was too small to handle such an immense crowd, and the density soon increased to dangerous levels. Police tried to block more people from entering the jammed parade grounds, triggering a stampede. People began to suffocate around 5 pm as thousands of other revelers danced to techno music, unaware of the tragedy that was unfolding nearby. In the end, 21 people died, and 651 were injured.

The Astroworld tragedy seems to have been centered on the crowd packed into the mosh pit rather than a more typical bottleneck scenario. There was [a 2013 study](#) on mosh-pit dynamics by a group of physics students at Cornell University, inspired when co-author Jesse Silverberg attended a heavy metal concert with his girlfriend. He wisely avoided the mosh pit and, like a true physicist, found himself fascinated by the motion of the crowd, which struck him as resembling the disordered collisions of molecules in a gas.

Silverberg and his co-authors [decided to simulate](#) mosh-pit dynamics. They drew on footage from rock concerts posted on YouTube and used a particle tracking program to convert everyone in those crowds into individual particles, dubbed MASHERS (Mobile Active Simulated Humanoids). There were two kinds of MASHERS: passive ones who stayed stationary after an accidental collision, and active ones who bounced after a collision. The researchers found that, when there were more active MASHERS than passive ones, the crowd did indeed behave like molecules in a gas, with random collisions. But sometimes, spontaneous "flocking" would occur, in which MASHERS began following their neighbors' motions. In that scenario, vortices would form—basically human whirlpools.

Of course, people aren't particles, and Silverberg *et al.* freely admitted they were using very simple mathematical models. Human beings are complicated and unpredictable, which is why there has been [a great deal of recent work](#) attempting to incorporate the human factor into the modeling of crowds.

For instance, [a 2015 study](#) by scientists at the University of Technology in Iran created a simulation that included so-called "emotional contagion." In it, the simulated people became increasingly fearful and panicked—expressed as increasingly random movement—as they failed to find an exit from the crowded virtual environment. Similarly, [a 2018 study](#) by University of Plymouth researchers figured out how to measure the kinetic energy of crowds in real-time videos, using that as a gauge to identify areas where the crowd was transitioning into a dangerous emotional state.

Dinesh Manocha, a computer scientist at the University of Maryland, has conducted [several studies](#) on crowd behavior. He has sought [to incorporate](#) not just physics and physiology but [also psychology](#) into his models. That said, "In many ways, we don't have access to the exact data, situation and crowd movement that occurs at such tragedies," Manocha told Ars. "You typically hear the experiences of a few attendees or some isolated pictures and videos that do not provide all the details." Nonetheless, there are two factors he has observed in his research over the years that seem common to all such tragedies.

The first, as we've seen, is density—specifically, situations where crowd density reaches more than four people per square meter. "In many ways, each human or pedestrian loses his/her capability to move independently in such density, but rather they become part of a macroscopic flow," said Manocha. "So crowd tragedies are more likely to happen in such scenarios, as humans lack the ability to escape from the crowd flow."

Multiple media reports of the Astroworld tragedy have referenced the high density and chaos of the crowd, particularly in the mosh pit. "This was preventable," concert-safety consultant Paul Wertheimer [told the Los Angeles Times](#). "The crowd was allowed to get too dense and was not managed properly." He believes the popularity of "festival seating," on a first-come, first-serve basis (as opposed to having reserved seats) exacerbates the problem, since concertgoers can pack in at much higher densities.

The second factor influencing crowd surges, per Manocha, is individual behaviors. "The individual personalities of the participants plays a major role," he said. "Some of them tend to be aggressive, while others can cause or spread panic." He and his colleagues have explored how individual personalities and behaviors impact the flow and movement of a crowd. "However, we can't validate these models completely in real-world crowd disaster settings because of lack of sufficient data," he said. "For example, we do not have any information about the [behavior and personalities](#) of all the individuals that were present."

According to Manocha, many event-management companies now deploy lots of camera systems to capture high-resolution footage of individual people in a crowd, which can in turn be analyzed with computer vision techniques. He has found this useful for searching for individual behavioral cues, such as aggressive behavior, panic, and rapid movements, which could trigger dangerous crowd surges.

"For example, we have [good technologies](#) that can forecast severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, or snow storms," said Manocha. "That provides enough warning to the public and law enforcement authorities. Similarly, we can [deploy a lot of cameras](#) that can [monitor these crowds](#) in all parts of such stadiums or concert venues. The AI software can automatically monitor the movements and behaviors and provide warning signs to the law enforcement authorities in advance."

In the meantime, there are several precautions one can take to stay safe in dangerously crowded conditions, according to [Mehdi Moussaid](#), a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. He had just completed his doctoral thesis on the movement of crowds when the 2010 Love Parade disaster occurred, and he has been researching crowd dynamics ever since. In a [2019 article for The Conversation](#)—which is updated regularly, a testament to the unfortunate prevalence of such crowd surge events—Moussaid offered several survival tips for people who find themselves in potentially dangerous crowded situations.

	<p>Ideally, one should be able to identify when the crowd is becoming too dense: if you're accidentally bumping into a couple of people around you, moving to a less congested area might be a good idea. If you can't move your hands freely, you are now in a dangerous crowd condition.</p> <p>Moussaid's tips in this scenario include trying to remain upright to avoid being trampled; keeping your arms at chest level, folded in front of you to protect your rib cage; avoiding screaming to save your breath, since the majority of deaths in crowds are due to asphyxiation; trying to locate the epicenter of the crush and look for viable escape routes (including scaling a fence or climbing onto a ledge); and trying not to panic. Also, people often try to resist the pressure of the crowd and push back. Moussaid advises going with the flow—unless you're next to a wall, fence, or other barrier, which should be avoided in densely crowded situations.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 Gov. orders govt. all-electric fleet by 2035</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Washington-governor-signs-executive-order-for-16604057.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Washington-governor-signs-executive-order-for-16604057.php</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has signed an executive order that seeks to move state government to an all-electric fleet of vehicles by 2035.</p> <p>The order, signed Nov. 3, requires the 24 executive branch agencies under Inslee's control — including the Washington State Patrol and Department of Transportation — to buy battery-powered electric vehicles to replace passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks with internal combustion engines once they need to be replaced. The Herald of Everett reports that the order requires at least 40% of the fleet to be electric by 2025, 75% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.</p> <p>For medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trucks, Inslee wants to see 30% of those be electric by 2030 and 100% by 2040. When a battery-powered model is not available, agencies must acquire “the lowest-emission, cost-effective option,” such as plug-in hybrid electric.</p> <p>Roughly 5,000 state vehicles are covered, the vast majority of which now run on gasoline or diesel. Each of the agencies is required to prepare a plan with costs and a timetable for complying with the targets.</p> <p>Inslee announced the order in Glasgow, Scotland where he is participating in the Conference of Parties, an international summit focused on finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to the worsening impacts of climate change.</p> <p>“Together with the rest of the leaders here and those everywhere else today who are committed to this fight, we will lead the charge on de-carbonizing the transportation sector,” Inslee said in a statement.</p> <p>An Inslee spokeswoman said they will work with the Legislature to secure funding for additional electric vehicle charging stations to support an electric fleet. Also, federal funding will be sought.</p> <p>On Monday, Inslee also voiced support for requiring all new cars sold in the state beginning in 2035 to be zero-emission vehicles. And he endorsed ensuring new building construction generates no net increase in emissions by 2030.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 King Co. homeless population 2020 Census</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/heres-what-the-2020-census-tells-us-about-king-countys-homeless-population/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/heres-what-the-2020-census-tells-us-about-king-countys-homeless-population/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	The 2020 Census intended to count every person living in the United States, and that included people experiencing homelessness or living in transitory locations.

The data that includes the count of the homeless population was recently released, enabling us to look at the numbers at the neighborhood level.

Before we take a look at the numbers for King County, I should explain one important caveat about this data.

People experiencing homelessness are counted among the “group quarter” population — that’s Census Bureau terminology for anyone who doesn’t live in a housing unit (such as a house, an apartment or condo, a mobile home, or an SRO). There are many types of group quarters. Some are called institutional, such as prisons and nursing homes. Others are considered non-institutional, such as college dorms and military barracks.

The homeless population is categorized as living in “other non-institutional facilities.” This category includes both those staying overnight in missions, shelters and other facilities for the homeless, as well as those who are unsheltered.

The caveat is that this category is a combined category. In addition to the homeless population, it includes the counts of a few other populations. These are people living in adult group homes or residential treatment centers, on maritime/merchant vessels, in worker dormitories/job corps centers, and in living quarters for victims of natural disasters.

I imagine all these are rather small populations in King County, and the great majority of the people counted in the “other non-institutional facilities” category are people experiencing homelessness.

So what does the data show?

There were 15,419 people countywide counted as living in other non-institutional facilities.

By way of comparison, the 2020 Point-in-Time Count for King County found 11,751 people experiencing homelessness on one night in January — one important difference, though, is that this count was done before the coronavirus pandemic took hold, while the Census Bureau count was undertaken during the pandemic, from Sept. 22-24, 2020.

The census data shows the highest concentration of people living in other non-institutional facilities is in Seattle’s Pioneer Square neighborhood. There were 699 such people in this census tract, which pencils out to more than 20% of the total population of 3,374.

There are two other areas where more than 10% of population was people living in a non-institutional facilities. They are in downtown Seattle (in the census tract that includes a long stretch of Third Avenue) and the Sodo neighborhood.

There are seven Seattle census tracts between 5% and 10% of the population was composed of people living in a non-institutional facilities. These tracts are located in central Ballard, Lower Queen Anne, Interbay, Belltown, and on First Hill near the Harborview Medical Center.

But in most of King County’s nearly 500 census tracts, this population made up less than 1% of the total.

And there were 129 tracts without a single person living in a non-institutional facilities.

You may be curious about how the Census Bureau went about counting the population experiencing homelessness, as it is a challenging population to count.

One strategy involved working with local groups across the county to identify outdoor and other locations where people are known to sleep, whether that was in a car or RV, in tent encampments, parks, beaches,

	<p>wooded area, highway underpasses, and so on. People were also counted staying overnight at 24-hour businesses, such as laundromats and transit stations.</p> <p>Census takers went to these locations and counted people in person.</p> <p>Census takers also went to service locations for the homeless, such as shelters, missions and hotels and motels used to house the homeless, soup kitchens and regularly scheduled mobile food vans.</p> <p>(Note: Some people experiencing homelessness move into the household of a friend or relative. Since these individuals were living in a housing unit, they would not be counted among the homeless living in non-institutional facilities).</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Vaccine mandate divides rural hospital staff</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/how-a-vaccine-mandate-divided-a-rural-washington-hospitals-staff/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/how-a-vaccine-mandate-divided-a-rural-washington-hospitals-staff/</a>
GIST	<p>DAYTON, Wash. – The state’s vaccination deadline for health-care workers was less than a week away when Shane McGuire called his HR department for another daily update. The CEO of tiny Dayton General Hospital listened to the phone ring as he squeezed a stress ball and straightened the sign he’d hung on his office door in the latest effort to unite a fracturing staff: “We Are One.” “How’s it looking for us on the mandate?” he asked, when the head of HR picked up.</p> <p>“You mean in terms of the emotional fallout, or just numbers?”</p> <p>“Numbers. I can handle the numbers,” McGuire said, and a few minutes later he opened his email and studied the list that had been dividing this rural hospital in southeast Washington ever since the governor issued one of the country’s first vaccine mandates in August. Dozens of McGuire’s employees were still marked as unvaccinated. At least 15 were in the process of applying for religious or medical exemptions, a few had already quit in protest, and many more were facing termination unless they decided to vaccinate against the coronavirus in the next five days before the mandate went into effect.</p> <p>McGuire liked to refer to his small staff as a family, and many in fact were family, but it had been splitting in two since the beginning of the year, when exactly 50% of the hospital’s few hundred employees chose to be vaccinated and 50% refused. McGuire had lined up for the first dose he could get, believing it marked an endpoint to the pandemic; his 25-year-old daughter, Jessica, an employee in the hospital clinic, decided she didn’t feel comfortable getting vaccinated for at least a year. His medical director told the staff that mass vaccination was “safe, wildly effective and absolutely necessary.” His director of nursing wrote that it was “government overreach and medical tyranny.” His two respiratory therapists were a husband-and-wife team, married 40 years, and now one was vaccinated and one was not.</p> <p>McGuire had spent the last nine weeks gently pushing his staff to vaccinate by the deadline, because he feared parts of his hospital would have to close if he lost too many employees, and also because he believed vaccination was the right and responsible thing to do. He’d asked the pharmacist to send out mass emails with data about safety and efficacy. He’d consulted with a leadership coach, who spoke about the transformative power of treating everyone with kindness and grace, regardless of their beliefs.</p> <p>“Let’s not jump on the slippery slope of judgment with regards to vaccination status,” McGuire had written to the staff in late August. “We are NOT the vaccinated and un-vaccinated. There is only one team.”</p> <p>“It’s our intention to retain every employee who wants to be here,” he’d written in September. “Please come talk to HR before you walk away assuming there are no options.”</p> <p>Now he twisted a paper clip in his hand and looked over the list of unvaccinated colleagues he feared he might soon lose: a nurse who did most of the drive-through coronavirus testing, swabbing a dozen patients</p>



per hour; an eldercare specialist who read books aloud to her patients to help keep them company; four health aides; three people in nursing; two in dietary; one each in finance and IT.

And then there was the only administrator on the list, Katie Roughton, director of nursing, who had managed to lead the hospital's nursing home through the pandemic without suffering a single covid death. She'd trained new employees on infection control, declined her own pay raises to help the hospital save money and helped run the annual flu vaccination program, but now she was on the verge of leaving over a different shot.

"Kindness and grace," McGuire reminded himself, and then he sent Roughton a message.

"I'm sure this final countdown is hard," he said. "But I just want you to know how much we value and appreciate you."

For most of the last 25 years, Roughton had been walking or driving a half-mile each morning from her house into the hospital she sometimes called her "real home." She'd started as a nurse's aide right out of high school, saved to put herself through nursing school, eventually risen into administration, and now she was standing at the front of a small conference room, teaching five aspiring nurse aides how to care for the patients she was thinking of leaving.

"How long does the state say you need to wash your hands?" she asked her students. Her voice was hoarse and her eyes were red. For the last week, she'd been having periodic breakdowns brought on by what she thought was "grief, stress, anger, frustration."

"You have to wash for one minute," a student answered.

Roughton stared back at him and cocked her head. "Come on. I might not be there on-site to correct you."

"Two minutes?"

"Good," she said. "In health care, you either follow the rules or get cited."

The bulk of her job for the last 18 months had involved learning and incorporating new state rules to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Nursing homes were the most regulated part of health care, so during the pandemic she'd demanded more masks for her staff and taken charge of the hospital's hazmat team and disaster committee. She trained her staff to follow a dozen state and federal mandates, but as the initial weeks wore on, she began to question their value.

Her staff needed to wear N95 masks at all times, but many of their residents were hard of hearing and couldn't understand what was being said to them.

Her residents were also supposed to wear masks, but some suffered from dementia, and they often forgot, or refused, or placed the masks over their eyes, or, in one case, started swallowing part of the mask and choking on it.

The governor banned all nonessential procedures, which meant postponing a gallbladder operation for a 90-year-old who started to lash out as his pain worsened, choking one nurse and biting another nurse's finger down to the bone.

The residents were not allowed to have visitors, which meant some began to suffer health declines from what doctors said was loneliness and depression. Roughton and her staff took extra shifts to keep them company, threw them weekly parties and dressed in costumes to entertain them.

And for an entire year, it mostly worked. They kept covid out of the facility for longer than any other nursing home in the state and planned a party to celebrate. Then, on the day their "Covid Free!" T-shirts arrived, two residents tested positive. One had been vaccinated; one had not. The state required all

residents to quarantine in their rooms for at least two weeks. Roughton was trying to explain the policy to a 102-year-old woman who was banging on her own door, begging to come outside, when Roughton got a call from one of the hospital's doctors. "How do we handle infection control?" he asked, and Roughton felt herself snap. "Do you want my personal or professional opinion?" she asked, and before long she was prodding him about the breakthrough infection and the science of vaccines, and he was calling her "stupid," and they were screaming at each other – doctor against nurse, liberal against conservative, no longer partners in patient care but adversaries staking out opposite sides in an ideological battle that Roughton had been fighting since.

Regardless of scientific facts or the vaccine data, she believed what she was hearing on her TV, her computer, the local grocery store, her own family dinner table: The vaccines were rushed and oversold, and worse yet the state mandate signaled the government's latest attempt to seize greater control. It was an infringement on individual rights. It was socialism. Her father-in-law had taken an experimental anthrax vaccine before deploying for the Gulf War, and he blamed the side effects for making him permanently disabled. Four of her family members were being forced to quit their jobs over vaccine mandates, and they were encouraging her to do the same.

"If you're going to make it in health care, this has to be more than a job," she told her students. "You'll work like hell. You won't get rich. But you do it because you really care about the patients."

She paused and cleared her throat, trying to hold off another breakdown.

"It has to be a passion, because there's always that personal sacrifice."

One coffee shop in town required masks; another displayed a sign encouraging "Freedom for your Face." The local brewery instituted a vaccine mandate for employees; a pizzeria placed a job ad promising: "No vax, no problems!" It sometimes seemed to McGuire that covid protocols were splitting apart the school board, the business alliance and the entire town of 2,700 into two rival factions, and there was only one person left on the opposite side with whom he felt comfortable enough to have an honest conversation. As the deadline neared, he drove to a quiet restaurant to talk to his 25-year-old daughter.

"These are good nurses we're losing, and I still can't totally understand it," he told her.

"Some people just think differently," she said. "They feel differently. It doesn't mean you can just dismiss them."

"We all care about the same things," he said. "I have to believe there's still a possibility of common ground."

"Maybe," she said. "But what if it's a wall?"

"Then it's my job to climb over it," he said, and for months he'd been trying, encouraging his employees to come directly to him with their concerns about the state mandate. He'd listened to false claims about how the vaccines implanted people with microchips, or made them magnetic, or infertile, or increased the spread of the virus, or fundamentally altered DNA. He'd read through a stack of applications for religious exemption and tried not to judge, but to empathize.

"It's the mark of the devil."

"It's the equivalent of unclean food that causes harm to my conscience."

"It's a violation of the Nuremberg Code and a medical crime against humanity."

He waited as some of his employees consulted with their own lawyers and posted disinformation on Facebook, and since data and facts didn't seem to be changing their minds, McGuire decided to appeal to their common humanity. He asked one of his new nurse practitioners to talk to the staff about her

experiences treating covid in rural New Mexico. She spoke about setting up a field hospital near a Navajo reservation where hundreds of people had gotten sick, including her stepbrother, a healthy young father who suffered a sudden inflammatory response and died at home before he could get to a hospital.

"If I wanted to listen to more propaganda, I'd turn on the news," one nurse said to McGuire, shortly after that presentation. "That was insulting and manipulative."

"Thanks for sharing that with me," he'd responded. "I'm sorry you felt that way. It certainly wasn't our intention."

McGuire had come home each night and tried to burn off his frustration on a stationary bicycle as covid cases skyrocketed across rural Washington in early fall. Dayton's emergency room filled. The patients got sicker. Sometimes, at the height of the surge, the closest ICU with an available bed for a transfer patient was in Texas or California, and McGuire wondered: How? How had the rate of covid cases in rural Washington doubled after the widespread availability of safe and effective vaccines? How had so many people on his medical staff seemingly come to distrust science and medicine? One day he was riding in the car with his daughter, trying again to understand. "I can't logic this out," he said. "Please, help me." He'd listened as she explained that she didn't like the politics of being forced to take a vaccine, that it was her body, that she was young and healthy, that she feared rare side effects, that she didn't trust the government, that she wanted to see more data, until finally he couldn't listen for a second longer. "Stop!" he'd shouted. "Stop talking about statistics. You failed that class three times!" And then she started crying and asking to get out of the car, and he started crying because he feared the wall between them had hardened.

She had surprised him a few weeks later by deciding to get vaccinated along with five other employees at the clinic, some of whom considered it such an act of political betrayal that they vowed not to tell their families.

"What changed for you?" McGuire asked now. "Did our conversations make a difference?"

She shook her head. "Nothing changed. I did it because I had to, but I still don't feel good about it. I feel exactly the same way."

"Could anything change that?"

She shrugged. "You can take a reasonable person and make them unreasonable by pushing them. Maybe just respect. Patience."

But there was hardly any time left for McGuire's employees to decide, and in the last hours before the deadline Roughton went to see a former co-worker who'd already made her choice official. Tiffani McGhee had spent 27 years as an EMT, a firefighter and nurse before quitting a few weeks earlier.

"How's life on the outside?" Roughton asked.

"Lots of sadness, lots of anger, but I wake up each morning and I have my freedom," McGhee said, and then she started to describe what she imagined her life of freedom would look like. She planned to move to a remote property in the hills outside town, away from the "mask shaming and the reach of big government," she said. She was teaching herself how to can vegetables and stockpile enough food to be self-sufficient.

"I'm the kind of person that doesn't like being backed into a corner," she said. "Don't tell me: 'You have to do this.' It's against my rights."

"That's me, too," Roughton said. "I'm a stubborn ass and proud of it. I don't take the easy way."

It was the reason she'd kept her baby when she'd become pregnant during her sophomore year of high school, and why she'd walked home from class every two hours to breastfeed even when classmates teased her, and why she'd clawed her way off welfare, and why she'd survived an abusive relationship and found her way into a happy marriage. She'd been thinking lately about an incident in high school, when one of her best friends was killed in a drunk-driving accident that devastated the town. Hundreds of people had packed into a memorial service, and the pastor had started an alter call, urging students to devote their lives to God in honor of their friend. Roughton thought it was a shameless and coercive tactic, but one by one the other teenagers started coming onto the stage in their grief. The pastor and other students began calling her name, pressuring her, until after a while she was one of the few students left in the bleachers, still anchored firmly in her seat.

"Sometimes you have to take a stand," she said.

"You're damn right," Tiffani said. "I started tearing up this morning watching all these nurses walk out around the country on Fox News."

Roughton frowned and shook her head. "You've got to give that up," she said.

"What?"

"Fox News. I heard they did their own mandate. I switched over to Newsmax."

It was the latest piece of her life she'd surrendered on principle: Sunday afternoon football, after the players started to kneel during the national anthem; her Costco membership, after the store mandated masks; regular dinners with her parents, after she saw a Joe Biden sign in their front yard. During the last several months, she'd started talking to her husband about leaving liberal Washington and moving with their children and grandchildren to Montana or Idaho.

"Me and this place – we're going in separate directions," she said, which meant she knew what she wanted to do.

She packed a box of her supplies and drove to work at the hospital for the last time dressed in a shirt that read: "Born Free. Live Proud." She walked into the nursing home without a mask and stopped to say goodbye to some of her staff. One nurse came up to her and confessed that she'd gotten vaccinated before the deadline because she couldn't afford to lose her job. "I feel tainted," she said, and Roughton squeezed her hand. Another aide said she'd been granted a religious exemption thanks to a letter written on her behalf by her uncle, a pastor in Florida.

"I caved," she told Roughton. "I wasn't as strong as you."

"I don't feel strong," Roughton said. She smiled and waved at two of the residents, who were rolling their wheelchairs into the cafeteria for lunch. "I better get out of here before I lose it," she said.

She walked out the door toward the administration building. McGuire was sitting at his desk, working his stress ball. He saw her T-shirt and he knew.

"So, this is it," he said.

She showed him her set of master keys and dropped them on the nearby desk.

"We're going to miss you," he said.

"You could have made this a lot easier by being an a--hole," she said.

"There's always going to be a spot for you," he said. "This isn't the end of our story."

	<p>She nodded, blinked back tears, and walked out to her car. McGuire watched her go and turned back to the list on his computer, checking the final numbers as the deadline arrived. Seventeen employees had been granted religious exemptions. Two had left to take health-care jobs across the border in Idaho. Nine more had either quit or chosen to be fired. But at least 50 employees had gotten vaccinated in the last weeks as a result of the mandate, and McGuire had retained more than 90 percent of his staff.</p> <p>“There are no words to express how incredible this is, knowing how hard the decision has been for many of you,” he wrote to his staff.</p> <p>He asked the HR director to post a few of the new job openings online. “I’m glad we got through it,” he told her, but then a while later McGuire looked beneath the postings at the comments, which pointed not to an endpoint but to a widening divide and the work still ahead.</p> <p>“Stop firing good people in the name of socialism.”</p> <p>“Poor anti-vaxxers. Goodbye and good riddance.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 China city cash rewards for Covid tips</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/09/chinese-city-offers-cash-for-clues-as-covid-outbreak-declared-a-peoples-war">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/09/chinese-city-offers-cash-for-clues-as-covid-outbreak-declared-a-peoples-war</a>
GIST	<p>Residents of a Chinese city bordering Russia have been offered major cash rewards for tips on the continuing Delta outbreak, with local officials declaring a “people’s war” on the virus.</p> <p>Authorities announced the 100,000 yuan (\$15,640) rewards for residents in Heihe, in the north-eastern Heilongjiang Province, as its total tally of cases in this outbreak reached 240.</p> <p>“It is hoped that the general public could actively cooperate with the tracing of the virus and provide clues to the probe,” the declaration said.</p> <p>According to state media, officials have urged people in the border city to immediately report any instances of illegal hunting, animal smuggling, or people crossing the border to fish. It also warned of severe penalties for people who intentionally conceal relevant information.</p> <p>China’s health commission reported another 62 locally transmitted symptomatic cases on Monday, and 43 on Tuesday, adding to the more than 940 cases recorded in at least 20 provinces nationally since October, in the country’s worst outbreak since Wuhan in early 2020.</p> <p>The government is <a href="#">committed to a Covid Zero strategy</a>, and is deploying an escalating array of measures in its attempts to eliminate the virus from the community again.</p> <p>Henan province authorities have said they will “catch and kill” the virus within a week, with provincial party secretary Lou Yangsheng <a href="#">vowing to expand lockdowns</a> and contact tracing as necessary.</p> <p>Authorities in Chengdu have expanded tracing measures and orders, reportedly identifying some people if their mobile phones transmitted through the same cell tower in a 14 day period.</p> <p>The measure, dubbed “spacial-temporal overlap”, classifies someone as a close contact if the phone signal was within 800 square metres of a case for more than 10 minutes, or if both parties spent at least 30 hours in the identified area over the two week period.</p> <p>The method saw authorities order about 82,000 people who had visited a massive shopping complex to get tested and then self-isolate. Video footage purported to show some people climbing over fences to escape the mandatory testing requirement.</p>

	<p>Earlier this month authorities <a href="#">locked down Shanghai Disneyland</a> and tested all guests inside after a previous visitor was diagnosed with the illness.</p> <p>With the outbreak continuing, health officials have called for an acceleration of booster shots and vaccinations to children.</p> <p>Wang Qinghua, chief immunologist of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said it was previously thought children were largely unaffected by Covid-19, but the situation had changed as the virus mutated.</p> <p>“We have seen increased infections in children, with the rates of severe illness and mortality surpassing influenza in some countries ... and the hospitalisation rate for children is now more than 10 times higher than earlier this year,” he said, according to state media.</p> <p>According to the Global Times, health authorities have set a target of vaccinating all eligible children aged 3 to 11 before the end of the year. More than 3.5m doses have been delivered to the age group so far, according to government data. Vaccinations are voluntary in China.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 Singapore unvaccinated by choice to pay</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/09/singapore-to-start-charging-covid-patients-who-are-unvaccinated-by-choice">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/09/singapore-to-start-charging-covid-patients-who-are-unvaccinated-by-choice</a>
GIST	<p>Singapore will no longer pay the Covid-19 medical bills for people “unvaccinated by choice”, the government said, as the country grapples with a surge in cases.</p> <p>The government currently covers the full Covid medical costs for all Singaporeans, as well as permanent residents and long-term visa holders, unless they test positive soon after returning home from overseas.</p> <p>However from 8 December, <a href="#">the government said</a> it will “begin charging Covid-19 patients who are unvaccinated by choice”.</p> <p>It said unvaccinated people “make up a sizeable majority of those who require intensive in-patient care and disproportionately contribute to the strain on our healthcare resources”.</p> <p>Covid-related medical bills will still be paid for people who aren’t eligible for a vaccine. The government will also foot the bill for individuals who are partially vaccinated until 31 December, giving them time to get a second dose.</p> <p>Singapore has among the highest coverage rates in the world, with 85% of the eligible population fully vaccinated.</p> <p>Yet the city state is struggling with rising Covid infections and last month warned its healthcare system was at <a href="#">risk of being “overwhelmed” by surging</a> cases. It came a day after the country expanded quarantine-free travel as part of a shift in its approach to dealing with the pandemic.</p> <p>The prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, previously said the global business hub could not remain closed indefinitely, and Singapore has moved from a zero-tolerance strategy with lockdowns and closed borders to living with Covid-19.</p> <p>A spike in infections after the relaxation of some restrictions prompted the island to pause further reopening in late October. Social curbs were extended for around a month in order to contain the spread of Covid and ease the pressure on the healthcare system.</p> <p>On 8 November, the country <a href="#">reported 2,470 new cases and 14 deaths</a>. The ministry of health said 67 Covid cases were critically ill in intensive care.</p>



HEADLINE	11/08 Germany's economy is stalling
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-economy-lagging-behind-europe-supply-chain-11636383954?mod=hp_lead_pos11">https://www.wsj.com/articles/germany-economy-lagging-behind-europe-supply-chain-11636383954?mod=hp_lead_pos11</a>
GIST	<p>BAD MARIENBERG, Germany—Germany's export-oriented economy used to be a reliable engine for pulling Europe out of slumps. Now, as the continent emerges from a pandemic torpor, Germany is lagging behind.</p> <p>German manufacturers are struggling to produce cars and factory equipment because of parts and labor shortages. They face surging energy prices that are making sky-high electricity bills even higher. And they must invest hundreds of billions of dollars over coming years to meet new clean-energy standards.</p> <p>The era of easy foreign trade and rapid globalization has given way to geopolitical tensions, transport bottlenecks and pressure to manufacture locally. Chinese businesses, Germany's biggest customers, <a href="#">are turning into competitors</a>. Demand for German luxury cars <a href="#">hangs in the balance</a> as the world shifts toward electric vehicles.</p> <p>German industrial output in August was about 9% below its 2015 level, compared with a 2% increase for the eurozone as a whole, according to the European Union's statistics agency. In Italy, <a href="#">whose manufacturers are closely tied with Germany's</a>, industrial output rose about 5% over the six-year period. The International Monetary Fund recently lowered its forecast for German economic growth in 2021 to 3.1%, from 3.6%. It expects Germany's economy to recover roughly in line with France and the U.K. through 2022, then fall behind starting in 2023.</p> <p>The malaise is fueling a debate among business and political leaders over whether the German economy needs a reboot and what it should look like. The three parties negotiating a new coalition government <a href="#">following September's election</a> want to increase public investments, raise wages and streamline planning procedures, which could boost domestic sources of growth and make companies less dependent on foreign demand.</p> <p>If implemented, the plans would represent the most comprehensive economic overhaul in years. Some economists think they also carry significant risks.</p> <p>The weakness in Germany's economy predates the Covid-19 pandemic. German industrial output and exports began stagnating in 2017, posing a problem for an economy where some 30% of jobs and output are tied to overseas demand, roughly four times the share in the U.S.</p> <p>The last time growth in Germany lagged markedly behind that of European neighbors was in the late 1990s and early 2000s, before a series of unpopular economic overhauls revived the country's competitiveness. For a few years, Germany was the world's biggest exporter of goods.</p> <p>Hans Eichel, a former German finance minister who presided over some of those reforms in 2003, said that today "the external environment is more difficult than 20 years ago. Even China is looking more and more toward internal demand."</p> <p>At Wilo SE, a pump manufacturer in northwest Germany, sales rose by more than 50% in the eight years through 2017, to €1.4 billion, or about \$1.6 billion, driven mainly by new markets such as China. Since then, its sales, most of which come from outside Germany, have been roughly flat.</p> <p>To guard against trade disruptions and protectionism, Chief Executive Oliver Hermes said, the company is shifting production and executives closer to its customers. It is establishing a second headquarters in Beijing and plans a third in the U.S., and will add production sites in China and India.</p>

The shift toward more localized production could mean “less export from Germany,” Mr. Hermes said, meaning fewer jobs in its home country. The company recently said it would close a factory in Eastern Germany, cutting or shifting 120 jobs.

Like other German auto suppliers, Mann+Hummel, a manufacturer of air-filtration systems based in southern Germany, faces a tricky transition as gas and diesel engines are phased out. Its sales declined about 9% last year as global car sales slowed during the pandemic.

“Supply-chain challenges and trade disputes have put stress on our model,” said Chief Executive Kurk Wilks. Raw material prices are rising, China’s economy isn’t growing as fast, and there are labor shortages, especially in the U.S., he said. “Beyond price increases, it’s the shortages of materials, certain commodities or shipping or transport,” he said.

The company has warned it could lose sales and market share if cleaner technologies such as electric motors displace gas and diesel engines, where its expertise lies. The company has announced plans to close several production facilities.

A decline in German car production this summer, mainly due to a persistent chip shortage, was the single biggest contributor to the overall drop in industrial output over that period.

German auto production has fallen by more than 50% since 2017, to around 200,000 a month. In the nine months through September, it declined slightly from the year-earlier period, compared with a roughly 10% year-over-year increase in global light-vehicle production over the same period. Germany’s share of global motor-vehicle production fell from about 7% to 5% in the five years through 2020, the data show.

Germany’s automotive industry, by far the biggest in Europe, supports about 800,000 German jobs and accounts for 5% of the nation’s overall economic output. Three-quarters of cars made in Germany are exported.

German manufacturers have invested in electric vehicles, but such vehicles [require far fewer parts than traditional ones](#). By 2030, 30% to 50% of all new car registrations in the European Union will need to be for electric cars if the continent is to meet its carbon-dioxide emissions targets, according to [Deutsche Bank](#) analysts.

The economy is one of the topics in the negotiations between the center-left Social Democrats, the environmentalist Greens and the pro-market FDP to form a coalition government. On Oct. 15, the three parties disclosed preliminary plans to increase public investments, especially in climate protection, high-speed internet, education, research and infrastructure.

“It will be the biggest industrial modernization project that Germany has carried out probably for over 100 years, and it will really help our economy,” said Olaf Scholz, the Social Democrats’ leader and likely future German chancellor.

After [years of belt-tightening](#) aimed at honing competitiveness, German businesses and the country’s public infrastructure are suffering from underinvestment, economists say. Germany’s net investment rate has been around 0.5% of economic output since the turn of the century, compared with about 1% for Italy and 1.5% for the U.S., according to the World Bank. German net public investment has fallen below zero as existing assets depreciate.

Some economists contend that Germany’s small national market means domestic demand alone, even the kind driven by investment rather than just consumption, will never support engineering businesses that often export 80% of their products.

“Germany will always be...an export country,” said Gordon Riske, CEO of Kion Group AG, a Frankfurt-based manufacturer of forklift trucks. “For us in particular, the revenue is outside of Germany, and we have to invest where customers are.”

Although the winners of September's election have presented the green transition as an economic opportunity, business groups and analysts say it will add costs and endanger jobs. Higher carbon and electricity prices and investments in cleaner production processes and research will eat into already dwindling profits, they warn, especially in a manufacturing-focused, energy-hungry economy.

The country's green-energy transition will require investments of €5 trillion through 2045, or 5.2% of Germany's annual economic output, on average, every year, according to a study published in October by KfW, the state-owned development bank. That is considerably more than the roughly €2 trillion spent reunifying West Germany with the formerly communist East Germany in the two decades after 1990.

"Germany's entire business model is at stake," said Oliver Bäte, CEO of German financial-services group Allianz SE. "If we get energy transition wrong, our economic core gets into trouble and an economic crisis becomes inevitable."

Germany's labor force grew by almost four million during Chancellor Angela Merkel's 16-year tenure, as strong growth sucked in older workers and immigrants. The workforce is now projected to shrink by the same amount over the next decade. Experts say reserves of fresh workers in Germany and Eastern Europe may largely be depleted.

Markus Mann, an entrepreneur in rural western Germany whose business manufactures wood pellets for use as fuel, said he recently sent a "Wanted" poster to his 80 employees, promising a €500 reward for new staff referrals. He has raised wages for his staff by 3.5%, around double the usual annual increase. Unemployment in the region is 2.8%. "I need to offer a bounty," he said.

The three coalition parties want to cut in half the time it takes for authorities to approve new investment projects, currently a serious hurdle for businessmen like Mr. Mann. Government bureaucracy costs German firms about €55 billion a year, roughly half the total amount invested in research and development, according to Germany's federal statistics agency.

Tesla Inc. hasn't yet received approval for a roughly \$6 billion factory outside Berlin that is expected to create 12,000 jobs. The auto maker has been building the plant for almost two years and has delayed its opening from July. The company recently built a factory in Shanghai in less than a year.

Thirty years ago, Mr. Mann said, he borrowed money from his father to build a wind turbine near his home, about 30 miles from the nearest large town. Government approval took three months, and the official assessment covered four sheets of paper and cost about €5,000 in today's money.

More recently, he sought permission to replace his old turbines with new ones that produced 40 times as much energy. This time, the approval process lasted seven years and cost almost €300,000, for an investment worth about €5.5 million, he said.

A spokesman for local authorities said that because the new turbines are much larger than the old ones, they could have a larger environmental effect, and hence require more testing.

ElringKlinger AG, a car-parts manufacturer in southern Germany, has started producing batteries and fuel cells, part of the industry's shift toward cleaner technologies. The new production processes are highly automated, said Chief Executive Stefan Wolf, "which means we need far fewer employees than for building internal-combustion engines." Total employment shrank by about 7% between 2018 and 2020, to about 9,700.

"We have very high labor costs, very high energy costs, and in the last five years, we have seen an enormous increase in bureaucracy," said Mr. Wolf. "Germany might soon be the sick man of Europe again."

HEADLINE	11/08 Rich countries face pressure: foot the bill
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/11/08/climate-change-loss-adaptation-cop26/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2021/11/08/climate-change-loss-adaptation-cop26/</a>
GIST	<p>The seasons are strange now in Beverly Longid's home of Cordillera, in the Philippines. The crops don't ripen at the usual times. The sun beats down hotter than ever before. The springs she always relied on for water have run dry.</p> <p>Human-caused climate change has taken so much from her people, said Longid, a member of the Indigenous Igorot community. Land from farmers. Food from children's mouths. Centuries-old rituals are no longer possible because the natural cycles they depend on are gone.</p> <p>"We hardly contributed to the problem," Longid said. "But it is us developing nations, us Indigenous people, who bear the brunt of the impacts."</p> <p>And she wants compensation for what she has lost.</p> <p>Funding for "loss and damage" — unavoidable, irreversible harms caused by climate change — has long been a rallying cry of civil society groups and vulnerable nations at international climate talks. But as rising seas, devastating heat waves and shifting seasons claim more lives and livelihoods in parts of the world, the issue has become more of a sticking point than ever at the COP26 negotiations in Glasgow, Scotland.</p> <p>"This is actually one of the biggest shortcomings in this process," said Mohamed Adow, director of the Kenya-based think tank Power Shift Africa. "We have clarity on the global goal to limit warming. But we don't have a comparable target ... to help the world deal with some of the inevitable impacts of climate change."</p> <p>A 2020 report from the Geneva-based International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies found that extreme weather and climate-related disasters killed more than 410,000 people in the previous decade, mostly in lower-income countries.</p> <p><a href="#">Other research</a> has <a href="#">estimated</a> that annual loss-and-damage financial needs in developing countries could hit \$290 billion to \$580 billion a year by 2030.</p> <p>Current levels of humanitarian funding — which must be allocated to survivors of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and violent conflicts, as well as climate crises — are less than one-tenth of that.</p> <p>People from hard-hit low-income communities say they are now paying the price for the wealthy world's choices: Of the planet-warming pollution in the atmosphere, more than half was emitted by people in the United States and the European Union.</p> <p>"We all know cumulative emissions," said Harjeet Singh, a New Delhi-based senior policy adviser for Climate Action Network International. "We all know who gained most from industrialization."</p> <p>Countries whose wealth was built on industries that polluted the atmosphere, Singh said, "should have stepped up and said, 'Yes we take that responsibility to act.' "</p> <p>But while the richest nations long ago promised to set aside \$100 billion a year to help vulnerable countries adapt to climate change and mitigate future warming — a promise they still have yet to fully meet — they have so far been unwilling to embrace more funding for the irreversible damage already taking place.</p> <p>"The finance for loss and damage is really missing," said Sandeep Chamling Rai, senior adviser for adaptation at the World Wildlife Fund.</p>

So far, the main international mechanism for addressing loss and damage has been a website for sharing expertise and resources around climate risks. In 2019, nations also agreed to set up a technical assistance program, known as the Santiago Network — though it doesn't yet have staff or funding.

"We need to be honest," said Yamide Dagnet, director of climate negotiations at the World Resources Institute. "At a time of despair, as we have seen this year ... a website is not sufficient."

Rich nations have traditionally feared that opening the door to compensation for climate impacts they largely caused could lead to massive and unending financial commitments.

Under the landmark Paris climate accord in 2015, developed countries notably agreed to language that acknowledged the "importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change." But they also insisted on including another clause, noting that the Paris agreement "does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation."

Even in wealthy countries that typically pride themselves on having an open wallet for international aid, such as Germany, the prospect of adding a bill for loss and damage drew a skeptical response.

"We are not exactly sure what 'loss and damage' means. How you can define it compared to other climate finance topics?" said Jürgen Zattler, director general of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

"We are still very much in the dark here," he said. "This is an important topic, but I do not believe that we should find quick-and-easy-fix solutions to these issues."

He said Germany had asked the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to study the issue.

But advocates for loss-and-damage funding say it's a separate issue from mitigation and adaptation, the current targets of most climate finance. Mitigation aims to avoid future greenhouse gas emissions, not address the climate impacts already underway. And some disasters will be unavoidable, no matter how much communities adapt.

"It's destroying our communities. It's killing our people," said Jo Dodds, president of the Australian advocacy group Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action.

In 2018, a bush fire cut through her small town, destroying 69 homes. These days, Australia's fire season extends for most of the year, reigniting survivors' trauma and choking the skies with smoke.

"It's not a single event anymore," Dodds said of that and similar disasters around the world. "It's a lifestyle of catastrophe."

When catastrophe strikes in wealthy countries, those nations are able to provide support to citizens who have been harmed. After the 2018 bush fires, the Australian government set up a fund of over \$1 billion to help fire-ravaged communities. Victims of record-setting flash floods in Germany this summer are eligible for millions of dollars in relief, and still more funding for rebuilding infrastructure.

Singh said requiring developing countries to curb emissions even as they cope with deadly climate impacts is like asking someone whose house is on fire to donate more funds to the fire brigade.

"If I put myself in the shoes of a finance minister, what am I going to do when my people are suffering? Am I going to build a solar farm?" he said. "No."

"First, help people recover, provide relief, make sure they are prepared for future disasters," he added. "Only then will we be spending less on loss and damage and have more financial capacity and resources and attention to actually meet our mitigation goals."

At the U.N. summit in Glasgow, activists see some signs of progress.

Last week, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon pledged 1 million pounds (about \$1,355,000) to the Climate Justice Resilience Fund for addressing loss and damage. It was the first time an industrialized nation committed to pay for climate harms incurred by developing countries.

The 61 countries of what's known as the "High Ambition Coalition" — a group that now includes the United States — released a statement recognizing the need for more resources to address the issue. And hundreds of banks, insurers, pension funds and investment firms also committed to shifting trillions of dollars away from polluting activities and directing some of those funds toward developing economies.

"These are important signals that give a view of how the world is changing," said María Laura Rojas Valejo, director of the Colombian advocacy group Transforma. "But it's not enough."

The issue has become even more salient during the coronavirus pandemic, which has left many developing countries deeply in debt and unable to pay for basic services, let alone major climate investments.

Real financial support for loss and damage, Rojas Valejo added, could also help rebuild trust between nations that has been fractured by the widening chasm in global vaccine access.

"Finance is the glue of this process," she said.

The issue has become unavoidable, and has gotten perhaps more attention during COP26 than at many other past climate summits. Rai says it increasingly will be impossible to ignore.

"At 1.1 [Celsius] temperature rise, loss and damage is hitting not only developing countries but also the developed world," he said. "Loss and damage is real. It is happening. We cannot really run away from it. So we need to act now."

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HEADLINE	11/08 Job seekers not hired in hot market?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/11/08/job-search-not-getting-hired/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/11/08/job-search-not-getting-hired/</a>
GIST	<p>Even as the United States has a near-record number of job openings and companies complain they can't find enough workers, some job seekers remain frustrated that they have not been able to get a job despite filling out dozens of applications daily on popular job sites like ZipRecruiter, Indeed, LinkedIn and Craigslist.</p> <p>American workers are increasingly seeking higher pay, more flexibility, and remote options as they flex their leverage in the current job market, but many companies are not necessarily being more accommodative, continuing to favor candidates with several years of experience in their industry, more availability to work evening or weekend hours, or a preference for those willing to work in-person.</p> <p>This mismatch in what both sides prioritize is yet another challenge complicating the country's economic recovery, helping explain weaker hiring <a href="#">in August</a> and <a href="#">September</a>. In many ways, supply and demand forces in the labor market are still out of equilibrium.</p> <p>While employers have complained for months about the difficulty they face hiring during a labor shortage with more than 10 million job openings for 7.4 million unemployed workers, interviews with job-hunting workers revealed a concurrent reality — difficulty finding suitable work, as they navigate the pandemic labor market.</p> <p>The geography of the Great Resignation: First-time data shows where Americans are quitting the most</p>

The deep frustration among both hiring managers and job seekers right now underscores the challenges in getting so many people back to work quickly and the growing divide between what employers want versus what job seekers want.

“A lot of the interest from employers is not spread evenly across the labor pool. There are some people in very high demand and there are some people who get no interest at all,” said Julia Pollak, chief economist at the ZipRecruiter jobs site. “Employers really do value prior experience a lot.”

Laviana Hampton spent years mixing drinks as a bartender at a popular nightclub in downtown San Antonio, but the pandemic has made her rethink her job. Hampton has seen covid infections hobble and kill some of her friends, making her far less willing to take any risks. A friend’s 70-year-old mother, who was like a second mom to Hampton, died last month of covid after spending three months in the hospital. Another bartender that Hampton knows contracted covid after returning to work and ended up in the hospital on a ventilator. Few in Texas wear masks in bars and restaurants.

For months Hampton, 40, has been scouring job sites for work-from-home positions in customer service and other fields so she won’t have to return to bartending in a packed club.

“I have every right to work in a safe working environment,” she said. “I want to work from home, I want to keep safe.”

There’s a growing preference for remote work among job seekers. Some 55 percent of people on ZipRecruiter reported looking for a job that would allow them to work from home. The vast majority said either workplace safety concerns or child or family care needs were driving their preference for remote work.

Hampton has not been able to land anything and is getting desperate since her unemployment ended over the summer. With no recent experience in many of the jobs she is applying for, companies are reluctant to give her a chance.

“I send out so many applications a day and nobody gets back to me. In the past eight months, I’ve only had three telephone interviews,” she said. “It’s affected my mental health greatly. I cry all the time. I’ve never been on unemployment before.”

Hampton is among 2.3 million Americans — about a third of the unemployed — who have been out of work more than six months. The Labor Department refers to them as “long-term unemployed.” The nation has only had this many long-term unemployed twice before — during the Great Recession and during the early 1980s downturn.

Black and less-educated Americans are disproportionately likely to be long-term unemployed, but during the pandemic crisis, White women with college degrees have also had unusually high numbers of long-term unemployment due to women who stopped working to care for children. Older Americans and those with an arrest or felony record face additional struggles to get hired, research and interviews show.

Complicating the job search for the long-term unemployed is the explosion of companies using robots to sort through job applicants, at least in the first round. This highly automated process excludes anyone who is not a near perfect fit on paper for a job. Nearly half of employers say they quickly reject candidates who haven’t worked in more than six months, according to a recent Harvard Business School study.

Jerry Vimont, 62, thinks his age is working against him. He wants a retail job in San Antonio and has over two decades of experience working for many of America’s biggest retailers as a cashier and manager, but he has not been able to get a job. He’s been applying actively on websites like Indeed and the Texas Workforce Commission since June, after he was vaccinated.



A big problem for Vimont is he stopped working before the pandemic, back in 2019, due to a wrist injury. He is cleared to work again, but the vast majority of retail jobs require an online application and he is finding it hard to get past the algorithms that scan applicants, since he now has a large gap on his resume. He has only had three interviews since June and no job offers. In one interview, a store manager bluntly stated that he only wanted to hire someone who would be around a long time, implying Vimont might not because of his age.

“With their algorithms, the hiring system is simply weeding out a lot of applications so companies don’t even see them,” Vimont said. “These are applications for jobs that I’m very well qualified for.”

He was recently rejected from an \$11 an hour assistant retail manager job that he said would have been ideal.

“People are applying to job postings thinking a human being is going to look at their submission, but they rarely get through if they have a gap in their job history or don’t have the exact right key words,” said Joseph Fuller, a management professor at Harvard Business School and lead author of the recent study that found more than 90 percent of major employers now use automated screening of job applications.

Despite having a college degree and decades of experience in executive roles in sales, marketing and strategy, Avital Shimshowitz gets rejected within hours for anything she applies to online. She used her network to get some interviews, but many tell her she’s overqualified for the roles they have open.

“Even if I’m willing to take a pay cut, I can’t get back into the workforce,” said Shimshowitz, who lives in Manhattan, N.Y. “I was successful. I’m 52 and I’m thinking: Am I over the hill?”

After losing a sales and marketing job during the pandemic, she has been working on her own pet care start-up, but she doesn’t have the funding to grow it. She recently completed a Stanford University certificate program to expand her skills.

Shimshowitz has plenty of company in New York. The state has seen a disproportionate increase in long-term unemployment since the pandemic began. New York had the third highest long-term unemployment rate in the nation in the 12 months ending in September, and was exceeded only by the tourist hubs of Hawaii and Nevada.

Many economists hoped that the pandemic had created such an unusual situation that employers would waive their normal requirements and change their screening techniques, especially since they are currently trying to hire so many workers. But so far, little of that has occurred. The main response from employers has been to raise starting pay in an effort to lure the best talent.

Staffing firm Adecco said last week that temporary jobs that pay less than \$18 an hour attracted few applicants, and that more than 40 percent of workers are seeking more flexibility or a job change. Still, the firm noted that many employers assume workers will lose leverage soon.

“Looking forward, talent scarcity for temporary roles will lessen as savings from support schemes are depleted,” said Coram Williams, Adecco Group’s chief financial officer, on the company’s earnings call this month.

Bartender Samuel Wiles, 34, isn’t having any trouble getting job interviews. With his seven years of experience making cocktails and managing bars in Los Angeles, he has received a lot of calls. But he’s noticed the interviews are very different from what they were pre-pandemic.

Before the pandemic, a bar manager tended to do the hiring. Now he’s noticed bar owners are often doing the interviews. At one interview, he tried to dazzle the owner by making a signature cocktail only to be told that the restaurant now makes most cocktails in batches to save time since they are so short-staffed. He did not get the job and was stunned to see that his experience seemed to work against him.

But the biggest surprise for Wiles is how many bars now demand “open availability,” meaning they want people who can work any night of the week. He can’t recall ever seeing that pre-pandemic, especially in Los Angeles where so many restaurant workers are also trying to break into the film industry and need time off for auditions and gigs. Wiles has had five interviews and told each one he’s willing to work any day but Sunday or Wednesday. He’s actually offering to work more nights now than he did pre-pandemic, but none of his interviews have led to job offers.

“The preeminent vibe I’m getting is the people hiring are desperate, but they are unwilling to adjust their expectations at all,” Wiles said.

Bars and restaurants were especially hard hit during the pandemic as states and cities shut down and restricted indoor dining. Staffing is still low in many restaurants, and workers are quitting at record rates, leading many restaurants to want new hires to be available to work any day to be able to fill holes, in case employees quit or don’t show up.

“Three waiters quit last week at the steakhouse where I work, because they are tired,” said Dean Lopez, a longtime server at high-end restaurants in Memphis. Lopez said the staff is already thin and the remaining waiters had to pick up even more tables and shifts.

At the same time, many business owners say they have been stumped by their inability to fill open positions with so many people out of work.

Andrew Wilson is the owner of Angel Water, which sells home water purification devices out of offices in Illinois and Florida. He’s had a hard time finding workers for more than 20 open positions since the spring. The positions pay \$15 an hour, plus commissions, for sales jobs selling filters at kiosks in places like Costco, and include benefits like health care for full-time workers.

But applications are few and far between. Even those who do apply and are offered jobs have been ghosting him by not showing up to interviews or the first day of work.

Wilson was pulling his hair out over the summer trying to figure out what was wrong. His sales positions, typically staffed by people in their 20s after college, require in-person work, but they had never been hard to fill. But he says he’s come to believe that unemployment benefits and people’s savings were making them less motivated to take jobs.

“I’m literally selling the job and selling myself to these people,” Wilson said. “Normally my question was, ‘Tell me why you think you’re a good fit for our organization.’ Now the tables have turned. I’m like, ‘Let me explain to you why I’m a good fit for you.’”

Wilson says he’s seen some improvement recently and has been able to hire eight people.

Many job seekers say they are looking for new lines of work, because they want more flexibility or a different career path — potentially exacerbating mismatches between jobs posted and the experience levels of job seekers in the market. At the same time, industries that have faced the biggest hiring struggles and most quits are increasingly looking for employees who have some experience in this area, because they are a safer bet.

“With all these jobs and all this competition, why are employers being so picky? Part of that is it just takes a long time for people to change the way they think,” said Chris Hyams, chief executive of job site Indeed.

Another problem is the unemployed are not always located where the job openings are.

Isaiah Washington, 25, has been looking for work for most of the last year, after losing his job as an archivist at the Smithsonian. He moved back to Louisville, where he is from originally, but has been

	<p>unable to land a job despite applying to 10 to 15 roles a day in digital marketing, sales and office administration, as well as at other museums. He's looking for a job that would pay \$15 to \$20 an hour and offer health insurance.</p> <p>The lengthy job search is taking a toll on his self-esteem. He's stopped checking boxes to specify his race — he's Black — fearing that was potentially holding him back. In advance of an interview a few weeks ago, he cut his hair short, which had been long enough to wear in a pony tail, wondering if that, too, could play a role. He didn't get the job.</p> <p>"I've always felt that I'm smart, I'm personable," Washington said. "But I feel so stupid doing this stuff. It's kind of hurt my self worth a bit."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Brewing storm: Northwest, Upper Midwest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/11/08/pacific-northwest-storm-atmospheric-river/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/11/08/pacific-northwest-storm-atmospheric-river/</a>
GIST	<p>A potent storm system in the northeastern Pacific will sling a plume of deep tropical moisture into Washington, Oregon and California, bringing heavy rain, wind and accumulating snow in the Cascades and northern Sierras. Then it will become a major weathermaker for the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest, potentially producing high winds and heavy snow around Veterans Day.</p> <p>The storm's first act comes Monday night into Tuesday, when it will drag an atmospheric river, a narrow swath of exceptionally moist air that produces heavy precipitation, into the Pacific Northwest. Drought-plagued Northern California, blasted by an even stronger atmospheric river two weeks ago, will be hit again, chipping away at its long-standing water deficit.</p> <p>After slamming the Northwest, the storm will glide across southern Canada, grazing the northern Rockies with snow Tuesday into Wednesday. Between Wednesday night and Friday, it will gain strength as it dives into the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest, blasting parts of northern and western Minnesota and the Dakotas with wind-whipped snow and bringing whiteout conditions to some.</p> <p>Farther south across the Plains and toward the East Coast, a line of downpours will form along a cold front dragged east by the system, with a soaking rain likely by Friday into Saturday.</p> <p><b>Act 1: West Coast soaker</b></p> <p>The catalyst for the heavy precipitation in the Pacific Northwest is an intensifying zone of low pressure several hundred miles west of the Washington-British Columbia border. This storm will strengthen fast enough through Tuesday morning to qualify as a meteorological "bomb," or "bomb cyclone."</p> <p>Counterclockwise winds around the storm will yank ashore a ribbon of moisture that will translate to heavy rain and appreciable mountain snows from western Washington to Northern California. The Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes is projecting that this atmospheric river will reach Level 3 on its 0 to 5 scale for these events.</p> <p>The core of the atmospheric river will aim at Northern California on Monday night and Tuesday. San Francisco is expecting one to two inches of rain. The Bay Area and much of northwestern California are also under a wind advisory for gusts up to 45 mph at low elevations and 55 mph in the mountains.</p> <p>Since atmospheric rivers transport most of their moisture at the mid-levels of the atmosphere. That means the greatest precipitation totals will be found on the western, or windward, side of mountains, where moisture-rich air will be forced up the higher peaks and condense. Three to four inches of rain could fall along the coastal mountain ranges.</p> <p>In the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada range, generally above 7,500 feet, winter weather advisories are in effect for four to 15 inches of snow.</p>

Heavy rain and mountain snow are also anticipated in western Oregon and Washington. While Seattle may see only an inch or two of rain, the northern Cascades may get up to a foot of precipitation (rain or the equivalent in melted snow) by the time mid-November rolls around. Mount Baker in Washington received nearly two feet of snow over the weekend.

## **Act 2: Possible blizzard over Northern Plains**

The American GFS model simulates heavy snow over parts of the Upper Midwest. (WeatherBell) After the atmospheric river lands in the Pacific Northwest and California, its parent storm will lose some steam near the U.S.-Canadian border late Tuesday, but its remnant moisture will bring some snow and low-elevation rain showers to the northern Rockies.

But by Wednesday, the storm will reorganize and intensify as it dives into the Northern Plains. Plummeting temperatures on its back side will combine with wraparound moisture, leading to a snowstorm that could bring blizzards and challenging driving conditions to parts of northern and western Minnesota and the Dakotas.

A steep pressure gradient, or change in air pressure with distance, will make for strong west to west-northwesterly winds gusting upward of 50 mph over the Dakotas on Thursday night. Those strong winds topping 40 mph will expand southeast over the Central Plains and Corn Belt during the day on Friday.

Moisture will be limited in the wake of the system, but enough may linger to brew light to moderate snow across the Northern Plains and Upper Midwest, with heavy amounts in northeastern North Dakota and northern Minnesota. While snow totals may be modest for the areas impacted, the presence of strong winds could lead to whiteout conditions and near-zero visibilities for a time on Friday.

Details are still being sorted out, but “confidence of some measurable snow is quite high,” according to the National Weather Service office in Grand Forks, N.D.

Some models, like the American GFS model, plaster the northern half of Minnesota with amounts flirting with a foot. The European model, meanwhile, depicts about half that. Not until Wednesday can a more accurate prediction be made.

In Minneapolis, temperatures may be too borderline to foster much in the way of accumulating snow on Veterans Day and into early Friday, but a few snow showers are possible if precipitation rates become heavy enough briefly during the day on Friday. That said, the National Weather Service notes that “any accumulations would be light if any at all.”

Farther south, the cold front extending from the storm center will be a rain producer. As of noontime Thursday, the front should be draped from Chicago to Memphis to Baton Rouge. On Friday, the front will swing toward the Appalachians.

A 6- to-10-hour window of light to briefly moderate rain is likely, totaling a half-inch to an inch in spots. Eastern Pennsylvania, New York state and New England may see a bit more, as a secondary wave of low pressure develops along the front off the New England coastline.

The rainfall will combine with gusting winds of 25 to 40 mph in the Great Lakes and Tennessee Valley out of the south ahead of the low, as well as on the back side of the system as cool air filters in from the northwest.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Romania doctors fight vaccine refusal
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/world/europe/romania-covid-vaccine-refusal.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/world/europe/romania-covid-vaccine-refusal.html</a>

COPACENI, Romania — As a new wave of the coronavirus pandemic [crashed over Eastern Europe](#) last month, devastating unvaccinated populations, an Orthodox Church bishop in southern Romania offered solace to his flock: “Don’t be fooled by what you see on TV — don’t be scared of Covid.”

Most important, Bishop Ambrose of Giurgiu told worshipers in this small Romanian town on Oct. 14, “don’t rush to get vaccinated.”

The bishop is now under criminal investigation by the police for spreading dangerous disinformation, but his anti-vaccine clarion call, echoed by prominent politicians, influential voices on the internet and many others, helps explain why Romania has in recent weeks reported the [world’s highest per capita death rate](#) from Covid-19.

On Tuesday, nearly 600 Romanians died, the most during the pandemic. The country’s death rate relative to population is almost seven times as high as the United States’, and almost 17 times as high as Germany’s.

“This wave is far worse than the others — it is like a war,” said Dr. Anca Streinu-Cercel, who works at the biggest infectious disease hospital, Bals National Institute, in the Romanian capital, Bucharest. “We go into our wards but don’t know when we will come out.”

Six ambulances carrying Covid patients needing urgent help waited outside for medical workers to find space inside overflowing wards.

What makes the surge particularly difficult, Dr. Streinu-Cercel said, is that it could have been easily avoided. A few who got shots fell seriously ill, she said, but this was because their immune systems had been compromised by treatment for cancer or other illnesses. “The only real reason anyone is here is because they did not get vaccinated,” she said.

Vaccine hesitancy, stoked by powerful forces online and in the real world, has left Romania with [Europe’s second-lowest vaccination rate](#); around 44 percent of adults have had at least one dose, ahead of only Bulgaria, at 29 percent. Overall, the European Union stands at 81 percent, with several countries above 90 percent. Complicating matters, Romania has been without a government since last month, when a centrist coalition unraveled.

Bulgaria, too, has a very high Covid mortality rate, with already overwhelmed hospitals flooded by new patients. This past week, one of the big hospitals in the capital city, Sofia, issued a plea for medical students and volunteers to help.

Latvia, a tiny Baltic nation where vaccine hesitancy is particularly strong within its large ethnic Russian population, last month became the first E.U. member to go into a full lockdown since the early phase of the pandemic in 2020. Russia, where less than half of the adult population has been even partly inoculated, and Ukraine, where the rate is below one-third, have also reimposed sweeping restrictions amid surging cases.

Stubborn vaccine resistance across such a broad array of countries has left many looking for answers in the one thing that unites them: their shared communist past and widespread disenchantment with the disarray and corruption that followed.

“Fake news has a huge influence on our population, and in Eastern Europe in general,” said Valeriu Ghorghita, an army colonel leading Romania’s vaccination effort. “Something we all have in common in this part of Europe is our political history of communism.”

Under leaders like Nicolae Ceausescu, Romania’s longtime dictator, who was overthrown and executed in 1989, “nobody trusted their neighbors, nobody trusted the authorities, nobody trusted anybody,” Colonel Ghorghita said.

This has made many people suspicious of what officials and doctors tell them to do, especially when the internet is full of vaccine-skeptical self-declared experts advising the opposite.

“Everyone is suddenly an expert and fake news is everywhere, 24 hours a day,” lamented Silvia Nica, the head emergency doctor at Bucharest University Hospital. Short of beds, it erected a big treatment tent in the parking lot and turned the lobby into a Covid ward. “I never thought this virus would stay so long. We are all exhausted.”

As she spoke, a 66-year-old Covid patient, Nicu Paul, gasped for breath on a bed nearby. His wife, Maria, also suffering severe pulmonary problems from Covid, lay in the next bed. Mr. Paul said he had worked for 40 years as an ambulance driver and never gotten sick — “God saved me,” he said — so he decided against vaccination because “there are so many rumors about the vaccine that I did not know what to believe.”

Romania began vaccinating its citizens last December and put the program under the military, the country’s most respected institution, according to opinion polls. The second most trusted institution, however, is the Orthodox church, which has sent mixed signals on vaccines, with Patriarch Daniel in Bucharest telling people to make up their own minds and listen to doctors, while many local clerics and some influential bishops denounced vaccines as the Devil’s work.

Colonel Ghorghita said he had been shocked and mystified by the reach of anti-vaccination sentiment. “They really believe that vaccines are not the proper way to stop Covid,” he said, adding that this was despite the fact that “more than 90 percent of deaths are unvaccinated people.” Old people, the most vulnerable demographic, have been the hardest to convince, he said, with only 25 percent of people over 80 vaccinated.

In central Bucharest, huge signs display photographs of gravely ill patients in hospitals as part of a campaign to jolt people back to reality. “They are suffocating. They beg. They regret,” reads a caption.

Dr. Streinu-Cercel said she was uneasy with trying to reach people by scaring them. “We should be talking about science, not fear,” she said, but “fear is the only thing that got the attention of the general population.”

Distrust of just about everyone and everything is so deep, she said, that some of her patients “are gasping for breath but tell me that Covid does not exist.”

“It is very difficult when so many people are denying all reality,” she added.

At a vaccination center at her hospital, only a trickle of people pass through most days, though vaccines are free and increasingly necessary following new rules requiring vaccination certificates to enter many public buildings.

One of those getting vaccinated was Norica Gheorghe, 82. She said she had held off for months on getting a shot but decided to go ahead this past week after seeing reports that nearly 600 had died in one day. “My hair stood on end when I saw this number, and I decided that I should get vaccinated,” she said.

At the start of the pandemic in 2020, Covid disinformation in Romania mostly followed themes that found traction in many other countries, according to Alina Bargaoanu, a Bucharest communications professor who tracks disinformation, with people spreading wild conspiracy theories under fake names on Facebook and other social media.

But as the pandemic dragged on, she added, this largely fake virtual phenomenon morphed into a political movement driven by real people like Diana Sosoaca, an elected member of Romania’s upper house of Parliament. Ms. Sosoaca led a protest in the north of the country that blocked the opening of a



	<p>vaccination center, denouncing the pandemic as “the biggest lie of the century,” and organized anti-mask rallies in Bucharest. Videos of her antics have attracted millions of views.</p> <p>Ms. Bargaoanu, the disinformation researcher, said she suspected a Russian hand in spreading alarm over vaccines, but conceded that many of the most popular anti-vaccination conspiracy theories originate in the United States, making them particularly hard to debunk because “Romania is a very pro-American country.”</p> <p>Colonel Ghorghita has taken to social media to rebut the more outlandish falsehoods, and also met with Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders to ask them not to fan the flames of disinformation. “They don’t have a duty to recommend vaccination but they do have a duty not to recommend against it,” he said.</p> <p>The Orthodox church is particularly important because of its strong influence in rural areas, where vaccination rates are half those in cities like Bucharest, where more than 80 percent of adults have received at least one shot.</p> <p>In Copaceni, a rural county south of Bucharest, workers at a small clinic offering vaccines said they were appalled by Bishop Ambrose’s anti-vaccine tirades.</p> <p>“I am fighting to get people vaccinated every day, and then he comes along and tells them not to bother,” said Balota Hajnalka, a doctor running the clinic.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 Auckland New Zealand eases restrictions</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/world/asia/new-zealand-ease-lockdown-restrictions.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/world/asia/new-zealand-ease-lockdown-restrictions.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, will relax many virus restrictions nearly 12 weeks into its lockdown, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced at a news conference on Monday.</p> <p>The easing of restrictions comes as the country records some of its highest daily case numbers since the pandemic began, with a record 206 cases reported on Saturday.</p> <p>Starting before midnight on Tuesday, Auckland will allow the reopening of nonessential retail outlets and of public facilities like libraries, museums and zoos. Patrons will not be required to be vaccinated, though masks and physical-distancing restrictions will be in place. Up to 25 people will be permitted to gather outdoors, as well as for funerals and weddings.</p> <p>Auckland, home to roughly a third of New Zealand’s population, went into a snap lockdown on Aug. 17 after a single case of the Delta variant was identified in the city.</p> <p>The resulting outbreak has proved impossible to quash, prompting <a href="#">an end to the Covid-zero strategy</a> that for most of the pandemic had allowed New Zealanders to live with few restrictions. The outbreak is largely contained to Auckland.</p> <p>As of Sunday, more than 90 percent of eligible people ages 12 and older across the Auckland region had received at least one dose of a vaccine, Ms. Ardern said. The government expects to hit its target of 90 percent fully vaccinated around Nov. 29, she added, allowing it to move to a new system in which vaccination certificates will be required to access many services in the city.</p> <p>“It will mean all businesses can be open and operate, it will mean we will manage Covid safely, but differently,” Ms. Ardern said.</p> <p>Some health professionals had called for <a href="#">restrictions to remain in place</a>, citing the disproportionate effect of the virus on New Zealand’s Indigenous Maori population, which makes up 37 percent of all cases in the outbreak despite constituting less than 17 percent of the wider population.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Pentagon: China navy world's largest
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/chinas-navy-now-worlds-largest-460-warships-2030-p/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/chinas-navy-now-worlds-largest-460-warships-2030-p/</a>
GIST	<p>China's navy is now the world's largest maritime military force and will deploy 460 warships by the end of the decade, according to the Pentagon's latest annual report on Chinese military power.</p> <p>The current warship arsenal for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) includes 355 naval platforms, including major surface ships, submarines, aircraft carriers, amphibious warships and mine warfare craft.</p> <p>By contrast, the U.S. Navy currently has 296 warships, but that arsenal includes 11 aircraft carriers capable of projecting power at long distances. Other Navy ships include 115 cruisers and destroyers, 68 submarines, 31 amphibious warfare ships and 59 small surface combatants and combat logistics ships.</p> <p>U.S. analysts say the PLAN, financed by China's growing economic might, is building new warships at a rapid pace, mainly guided-missile cruisers and destroyers and corvettes, while its submarine force continues to expand.</p> <p>"These assets will significantly upgrade the PLAN's air defense, anti-ship, and anti-submarine capabilities and will be critical as the PLAN expands its operations beyond the range of the PLA's shore-based air defense systems," the Pentagon report, made public last week, states. "By the end of 2019, the PLAN had commissioned its 30th Jiangkai II class guided-missile frigate (FFG), completing the production run while it finalizes a follow-on class with additional units under construction."</p> <p>As part of its drive to control the South China Sea and East China Sea, the PLAN is beefing up its littoral warfare capabilities with large-scale production of missile-firing corvettes. At least 70 of the ships will be built. Those vessels complement the force's 60 high-speed, missile-firing catamarans.</p> <p>Construction of eight Renhai-class missile cruisers began last year with the first new cruiser entering service. Each Renhai warship comes with 113 missile launch tubes capable of firing anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, torpedoes and anti-submarine weapons, as well as land-attack and anti-ship ballistic missiles.</p> <p>Newer warships are armed with 215 nautical-mile-range YJ-62 anti-ship missiles, and the newest missile, the 250 nautical-mile-range YJ-18A, the report said. Several modernized destroyers are outfitted with supersonic YJ-12A anti-ship missiles that have a range of 290 nautical miles.</p> <p>The long-range missiles will allow the Chinese navy to threaten U.S. warships at greater distances and are likely built in anticipation of a U.S.-China conflict over Taiwan.</p> <p>To support its strike missiles, the Pentagon says, the PLAN is building advanced reconnaissance, surveillance and command and control systems to provide targeting information to its warships and submarines.</p> <p>"The addition of land-attack capabilities to the PLAN's surface combatants and submarines would provide the PLA with flexible long-range strike options. This would allow the PRC to hold land targets at risk beyond the Indo-Pacific region from the maritime domain," the report said.</p> <p><b>A focus on subs</b></p> <p>Submarines remain a priority development for the PLAN, with new undersea warfare technology and an expansion of shipyards to manufacture underwater vessels, according to the Pentagon report.</p> <p>"The PLAN currently operates six nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), six nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), and 46 diesel-powered attack submarines (SSs)," the report said. "The PLAN will likely maintain between 65 and 70 submarines through the 2020s, replacing older units with more capable units on a near one-to-one basis."</p>

A major concern is the growth of China's anti-ship cruise missile firing submarines that include 12 Russian Kilo-class subs, most of which fire anti-ship missiles. China's missile-firing submarine fleet includes 13 Song-class boats and 17 Yuan-class boats, with production of 25 additional Yuan-class subs planned by 2025.

Its nuclear submarine fleet includes 12 vessels, including six attack submarines and six nuclear-missile firing boats that the report described as the country's first credible sea-based strategic nuclear strike vessels.

A total eight nuclear-missile submarines are planned by 2030 as part of a plan announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping for "stronger growth" in nuclear missile submarines. Additional nuclear attack submarines are being built that "could provide a clandestine land-attack option if equipped with land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs)," the report says.

The Chinese submarine force is expected to surpass the number of American submarines by 2030. But analysts say U.S. underwater warfare capabilities, including nuclear missile-firing subs, attack and non-nuclear missile submarines, will remain greater.

To bolster expeditionary warfare skills, the PLAN is rapidly building amphibious warfare ships, including a new category called the Yushen class. Yushen class are highly capable large-deck amphibious ships that will provide the PLAN with an all-aspect expeditionary capability," the report said. "The Yushen class can carry a large number of landing craft, troops, armored vehicles, and helicopters."

The navy already has seven large Yuzhao class amphibious transport docks with an eighth ship undergoing sea trials last year.

The amphibious warship "provide the PLA with greater capacity, endurance, and more flexibility for long-range operations than the PLAN's older landing ships," the report said.

The amphibious ships are deployed with marines and equipped with air-cushioned landing craft, helicopters, tanks, and armored vehicles.

PLAN aircraft carriers include the first domestically built ship, the Shandong, a modified version of the Soviet-built Liaoning sky-jump decked carriers. A third carrier is being built and will be larger than the two earlier carriers and be equipped with a catapult aircraft launcher.

Additional carriers are planned along with new carrier-based aircraft, the report said. The current jet is the J-15, with versions currently being modified for electronic warfare.

The PLAN also has built a prototype of a carrier-based airborne warning and control aircraft that the Pentagon said "appears externally similar to the E-2C/D Hawkeye."

PLAN marines also have been expanded from two brigades of about 10,000 marines to eight brigades to be used for expeditionary, conventional and irregular warfare. PLAN marines are deployed at China's first overseas base at Djibouti on the Horn of Africa.

The marines there provide "the PRC with the ability to support a military response to contingencies affecting the PRC's investments and infrastructure in the region and the approximately 1 million PRC citizens in Africa and 500,000 in the Middle East," the report said, using the acronym for People's Republic of China.

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HEADLINE	11/08 DHS waives Afghan immigration fees
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/taxpayers-cover-cost-afghan-evacuees-immigration-a/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/taxpayers-cover-cost-afghan-evacuees-immigration-a/</a>

GIST	<p>Homeland Security announced Monday that it will waive the usual immigration fees for Afghan evacuees who've been paroled into the country since the start of the airlift operation, leaving U.S. taxpayers to pick up the tab for their costs.</p> <p>The department said not having to worry about the fees will allow the Afghans to settle into their new lives more quickly.</p> <p>They'll also get "streamlined" processing to apply for work permits and asylum, which would give them permanent status.</p> <p>"By providing these evacuees with access to streamlined processing and fee exemptions, we will open doors of opportunity for our Afghan allies and help them begin to rebuild their lives in communities across our country more quickly," Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement.</p> <p>About 70,000 Afghans already have been brought to the U.S., most of them through Mr. Mayorkas' "parole" authority.</p> <p>The usual fee for applying for a work permit is \$410. The fee to apply to adjust status is usually \$1,140. The fee to have biometric data taken is \$85.</p> <p>Congress, in a spending bill this fall, approved billions of dollars in assistance for Afghans, including \$193 million for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Homeland Security's legal immigration agency.</p> <p>USCIS is supposed to be funded by immigrants themselves, under the principle that immigrants shouldn't be a burden to the taxpayer. But the Biden administration twice has asked Congress to pony up taxpayer cash to help the agency, which is in financial arrears because it doesn't charge enough to cover its expanding work.</p> <p>Humanitarian cases like refugees and asylum-seekers are traditionally fee-free, and those cases have been increasing, forcing USCIS to spend manpower without compensation.</p> <p>Though Congress approved the money for Afghans, some lawmakers have since raised questions about the scope of the assistance.</p> <p>Sen. Rob Portman, the top Republican on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, last week said there are serious questions about the lack of vetting that Afghans were put through before being brought to the U.S.</p> <p>He urged the administration to keep Afghans at military bases here to undergo a new round of vetting before releasing them.</p> <p>"We want to know who these people are," he said in a Senate speech. "They might possibly have a record, a criminal record, they might have terrorist affiliations. And that's why you need to do the proper screening and vetting."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Tears, hugs: vaccinated travelers enter US
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/travel/usa-travel-restrictions.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/travel/usa-travel-restrictions.html</a>
GIST	<p>The United States <a href="#">reopened its borders for vaccinated foreign travelers on Monday</a>, ending more than 18 months of restrictions on international travel that separated families and cost the global travel industry hundreds of billions of dollars in tourism revenue.</p> <p>Before dawn on Monday, thousands of excited passengers flocked into Heathrow Airport for the first flights to the United States out of London. They were welcomed by dozens of airline staff who beamed</p>

and waved American flags as they ushered guests toward designated areas for documentation and security checks.

“New York, baby, here we come,” shouted one passenger as he high-fived a Virgin Atlantic staff member who was dressed as Elvis Presley. “God bless America,” yelled another.

The policy shift has come in time for the holiday season, when the beleaguered tourism industry is eagerly awaiting an influx of international visitors, especially in popular big-city destinations. Eager to make up for lost time, tourists traveling on Monday had packed itineraries, from Broadway shows in New York and family days at Disney World in Florida to bingo nights in Arizona.

In New York alone, the absence of tourists in 2020 resulted in a loss of \$60 billion in revenue and wiped out 89,000 jobs across retail, arts, culture, hotels and transportation, the state comptroller found. Though travelers from abroad account for just one-fifth of the city’s visitors, they generate 50 percent of the city’s tourism spending, according to [NYC & Company](#), the city’s tourism promotion agency.

Towns along the borders with Mexico and Canada also suffered under the restrictions, which shut down land crossings to “nonessential” traffic and cost businesses millions of dollars. As a steady stream of traffic made its way through the San Ysidro, Calif., border crossing between Mexico and the United States on Monday morning, Todd Gloria, the mayor of San Diego, said, “This is a great day for Tijuana, for San Diego, and for the entire binational region.” Traffic at the Canadian border was less robust. Canadians returning to their country must take an expensive P.C.R. test, which makes going to the United States for a quick shopping trip impractical.

Monday was a day for grandparents to hold their grandchildren for the first time, for couples who had to make do with virtual interactions for almost 18 months to kiss and for families toting balloons, bouquets and welcome signs to gather eagerly in airport waiting areas.

Among the first passengers arriving from Paris to Kennedy International Airport on Monday was Olivier Krug, the director of the Krug Champagne house. He had rushed to book as soon as the travel restrictions were lifted to attend a Champagne festival in New York, he said.

“I’m coming to represent my Champagne,” he said. “It’s not the same when you can’t clink your glasses together.”

[Under the new rules](#), fully vaccinated travelers [are allowed to enter the United States](#) if they can show proof of vaccination and a negative coronavirus test taken within three days before departure. Unvaccinated Americans and children under 18 are exempt from the requirement, but must take a coronavirus test within 24 hours of travel.

While the new entry requirements ease travel for vaccinated travelers, they restrict people who were previously permitted to visit the United States, including unvaccinated travelers from Japan, Singapore, Mexico and other countries. Those who have received vaccines that have not been approved by the World Health Organization for emergency use, like the Russian Sputnik V, will also not be permitted to enter.

The extended ban on travel from 33 countries — including European Union members, China, Iran and India — decimated the U.S. economy’s tourism sector and resulted in losses of nearly \$300 billion in visitor spending and more than 1 million American jobs, according to the U.S. Travel Association, an industry group.

The reopening gave those in tourism-dependent industries a sense of hope. The chef Daniel Boulud, who owns several restaurants in New York City, said customers from overseas had started to call for reservations or to get placed on a waiting list before the ban officially lifted.

Few sectors of New York City’s economy lean more heavily on foreign tourists for revenue than the arts, and the city’s cultural institutions are more than eager for them to return.

“We’re waiting with arms open,” said Victoria Bailey, the executive director of the Theater Development Fund, the nonprofit that operates the TKTS discount ticket booth, where about 70 percent of the tickets are bought by tourists and roughly half of those sales are to foreign travelers.

According to the Broadway League, the industry’s trade association, in the 2018-19 season, the last full season before the pandemic, 19 percent of Broadway patrons were from countries other than the United States.

Ken Weiner, a spokesman for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, said that before the pandemic, international travelers accounted for about a third of the museum’s visitors; without them, the museum has hit something of a “ceiling” on attendance, he said. And Mr. Weiner noted that although New Yorkers may pay what they wish when they visit the Met, other visitors, including foreign tourists, must pay \$25.

Many of the airplanes arriving in the United States on Monday were [full of travelers reuniting with family and friends](#) after a span of almost 600 days. At Miami International Airport, a major hub for travel to and from South and Central America, Natalia Vitorini, a 28-year-old student living in Miami, met her parents on Concourse D after they got off the morning’s first flight from São Paulo, Brazil. She had her 3-week-old son in a stroller.

Her mother, Débora Vitorini, 56, who works in the biomedical industry in São Paulo, bought her ticket within hours of the announcement of the reopening date. She and her husband, Sergio, arrived a little after 6 a.m.

The last time they had seen their daughter was in March 2020. Natalia Vitorini got pregnant earlier this year, and gave birth to her son a few weeks ago. “I was waiting for the border to open so my mom can come to see my baby,” she said.

Some of the reunions were hard-earned. Jolly Dave’s odyssey started last weekend, with a seven-hour bus ride from the Indian state of Gujarat to Mumbai. There she took a three-hour flight to New Delhi, then boarded a 16-hour flight to Newark Liberty International Airport.

Ms. Dave, 30, was traveling to meet her boyfriend, Nirmal Shelat, 31, whom she had not seen since last winter, when she had returned to Gujarat, their home state, expecting to stay for a few months. But then India experienced a devastating coronavirus surge, and her travel was restricted.

On Monday morning, Mr. Nirmal was waiting for her in Newark’s Terminal B.

“My Lady Luck is back,” he said as he waited. “You can make daily calls, stay connected by FaceTime, but you want to experience her fingers, her touch, her kiss. She told me she wants to break the Apple wall.”

They saw each other from down a hallway, and embraced upon reuniting. She kept her mask on as they kissed. He grew emotional.

“The Apple wall is broken,” she said.

Airlines saw a big spike in online searches and ticket bookings for international travel — particularly from Europe and Latin America — after the administration announced in October that travel would restart on Nov. 8.

American Airlines said bookings over the three days after the announcement were up 66 percent for flights between Britain and the United States, 40 percent for those from Europe and 74 percent for Brazil, compared to a similar period a week earlier. United Airlines said that it sold more tickets for trans-Atlantic flights in the days after the announcement than during a similar period in 2019, a first since the pandemic began. Delta Air Lines said many of its international flights on Monday were fully booked.



Hotels across the country, particularly those in cities, also felt the impact of the reopening. [Hyatt](#), the hotel group, said that approximately 50 percent of its bookings by international travelers to the United States for the week of Nov. 8 came after the opening date was announced in mid-October, with travelers flocking to top cities like Los Angeles, New York and Miami.

The [JW Marriott in Downtown Los Angeles](#) saw a 17.7 percent increase in international bookings over the last week compared to the previous month. The city of Los Angeles is projecting an additional 1 million visitors and \$1 billion in revenue as a result of the country reopening to vaccinated international visitors.

There had been concerns about long lines at the airports given the additional paperwork required to fly. At Heathrow, long lines quickly formed at check-in counters as passengers fumbled through their phones and printed-out documents, though there were no major delays.

“Goodness, I feel so nervous,” said Bernadette Sumners, 56, from Stratford-on-Avon, England, who was taking her first flight since the start of the pandemic to visit her daughter in Oregon and her son in New York.

“There are so many things to remember and organize,” she said as she sat on a bench in the departure terminal, refreshing her email feed every few minutes as she waited for her negative coronavirus test result. “It’s very stressful, but I know it’s going to be worth it when I see my children and meet my grandchildren,” she said, her eyes welling up with tears.

Reyna Martinez, from Ensenada, in Mexico, crossed the border from Tijuana into California with her daughter for the first time in two years. She said she used to cross at least four times a year to see friends or go shopping. On Monday she was on her way to Long Beach, Calif., to visit a friend. “Who knows if they might close it again,” she said, speaking in Spanish. “I was worried if I didn’t go now, I might miss out. So here we are.

In Canada, Judy and Wayne Peters were packing up their cobalt gray BMW for their 1,520-mile journey south from Kelowna, British Columbia. They own a manufactured home in an upscale R.V. park in Yuma, a city halfway between Phoenix and San Diego.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadian “snowbirds,” typically retirees, flock to the United States each year to spend the winter.

Now that pandemic travel restrictions have been lifted, thousands are already on their way to Florida, Arizona and California, among other warm destinations, with campers and boats in tow.

“It was a mild winter here, so that worked out in our favor,” said Mr. Peters, 69. “But we are looking forward to being in a nice warm environment again, with our American friends.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Partisan gap Covid death toll grows
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/briefing/covid-death-toll-red-america.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/briefing/covid-death-toll-red-america.html</a>
GIST	<p>As 2020 wound down, there were good reasons to believe that the death toll during the pandemic’s first year might have been worse in red America. There were also good reasons to think it might have been worse in blue America.</p> <p>Conservative areas tend to be older, less prosperous and more hostile to mask wearing, all of which can exacerbate the spread or severity of Covid-19. Liberal areas, for their part, are home both to more busy international airports and more Americans who suffer the health consequences of racial discrimination.</p>

But it turned out that these differences largely offset each other in 2020 — or maybe they didn't matter as much as some people assumed. Either way, the per capita death toll in blue America and red America was similar by the final weeks of 2020.

It was only a few percentage points higher in counties where Donald Trump had won at least 60 percent of the vote than in counties where Joe Biden crossed that threshold. In counties where neither candidate won 60 percent, the death toll was higher than in either Trump or Biden counties. There simply was not a strong partisan pattern to Covid during the first year that it was circulating in the U.S.

Then the vaccines arrived.

They proved so powerful, and the partisan attitudes toward them so different, that a gap in Covid's death toll quickly emerged. I have covered that gap in two newsletters — one [this summer](#), one [last month](#) — and today's newsletter offers an update.

The brief version: The gap in Covid's death toll between red and blue America has grown faster over the past month than at any previous point.

In October, 25 out of every 100,000 residents of heavily Trump counties died from Covid, more than three times higher than the rate in heavily Biden counties (7.8 per 100,000). October was the fifth consecutive month that the percentage gap between the death rates in Trump counties and Biden counties widened.

Some conservative writers have tried to claim that the gap may stem from regional differences in [weather](#) or age, but those arguments [fall apart](#) under scrutiny. (If weather or age were a major reason, the pattern would have begun to appear last year.) The true explanation is straightforward: The vaccines are remarkably effective at preventing severe Covid, and almost 40 percent of Republican adults [remain unvaccinated](#), compared with about 10 percent of Democratic adults.

Charles Gaba, a Democratic health care analyst, has [pointed out](#) that the gap is also evident at finer gradations of political analysis: Counties where Trump received at least 70 percent of the vote have an even higher average Covid death toll than counties where Trump won at least 60 percent. ([Look up your county.](#))

As a result, Covid deaths have been concentrated in counties outside of major metropolitan areas. Many of these are in red states, while others are in red parts of blue or purple states, like Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Virginia and even California.

This situation is a tragedy, in which irrational fears about vaccine side effects have overwhelmed rational fears about a deadly virus. It stems from disinformation — promoted by right-wing media, like Rupert Murdoch's Fox News, the Sinclair Broadcast Group and online sources — that preys on [the distrust that results from stagnant living standards](#).

### **A peak?**

The future of Covid is uncertain, but I do think it's possible that the partisan gap in Covid deaths reached its peak last month. There are two main reasons to expect the gap may soon shrink.

One, [the new antiviral treatments from Pfizer and Merck](#) seem likely to reduce Covid deaths everywhere, and especially in the places where they are most common. These treatments, along with the vaccines, may eventually turn this coronavirus into just another manageable virus.

Two, red America has probably built up more natural immunity to Covid — from prior infections — than blue America, because the hostility to vaccination and social distancing has caused the virus to spread more widely. A buildup in natural immunity may be one reason that the partisan gap in new Covid cases has shrunk recently.

	<p>Death trends tend to lag case trends by a few weeks, which suggests the gap in deaths will shrink in November.</p> <p>Still, nobody knows what will happen next. Much of the recent decline in caseloads is <a href="#">mysterious</a>, which means it may not last. And the immunity from vaccination appears to be <a href="#">much stronger</a> than the immunity from infection, which means that conservative Americans will probably continue to suffer an outsized amount of unnecessary illness and death.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Scientists fight new misinformation source</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/sports/football/aaron-rodgers-vaccine.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/sports/football/aaron-rodgers-vaccine.html</a>
GIST	<p>This spring, he was auditioning to be the host of “Jeopardy!” Nearly every day, he pops up on television ads for national brands like State Farm insurance. And on Sundays this fall, he has led the Green Bay Packers to a division-best 7-2 record.</p> <p>Quarterback Aaron Rodgers is not just the N.F.L.’s reigning most valuable player, he’s a celebrity who transcends the nation’s most popular sport, a household name on par with Tom Brady and Patrick Mahomes.</p> <p>So <a href="#">when news broke that he tested positive for the coronavirus</a> last week and was unvaccinated, Rodgers justified his decision to not get vaccinated by speaking out against the highly effective vaccines and <a href="#">spewing a stream of misinformation and junk science</a>. Medical professionals were disheartened not just because it will make it harder for them to persuade adults to get vaccinated, but because they are also <a href="#">starting to vaccinate 5- to 11-year-olds</a>.</p> <p>“When you’re a celebrity, you are given a platform,” said Dr. Paul A. Offit, the director of the Vaccine Education Center at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. “When you choose to do what Aaron Rodgers is doing, which is to use the platform to put out misinformation that could cause people to make bad decisions for themselves or their children, then you have done harm.”</p> <p>The N.F.L. is investigating whether Rodgers and the Packers violated any of the league’s expansive Covid-19 protocols, which were developed with the N.F.L. Players Association. Rodgers admitted to flouting those protocols, including attending a Halloween party with teammates where <a href="#">he appeared in videos unmasked</a>. The Packers and Rodgers could be fined hundreds of thousands of dollars for failing to adhere to the rules.</p> <p>Rodgers is in the midst of a 10-day isolation period and did not play in the Packers’ 13-7 loss to Kansas City on Sunday. Like all unvaccinated N.F.L. players who test positive, Rodgers must provide two negative tests, taken 24 hours apart, after his isolation to return to the field, which could come as soon as Saturday.</p> <p>The lasting damage from Rodgers’s stance, though, cannot be measured in dollars or games lost or won. Vaccination rates in the N.F.L. are very high compared to the general population. Nearly every coach and staff member who is around players is vaccinated, and 94 percent of the 2,000 or so players have also been inoculated, according to the league.</p> <p>But given how popular the league is, even the handful of unvaccinated players get outsize attention. Wide receiver Cole Beasley of the Buffalo Bills, and quarterbacks Kirk Cousins of the Minnesota Vikings and Carson Wentz of the Indianapolis Colts have all been <a href="#">criticized for choosing to remain unvaccinated</a>.</p> <p>But they were upfront about their decisions. Rodgers, by contrast, <a href="#">evaded answering directly</a> when asked if he was vaccinated. He said he was “immunized.”</p>

In [an interview on The Pat McAfee Show](#) last week, Rodgers said he followed his own “immunization protocol,” though he did not provide details about what it entailed. But vaccination and natural infection are the only ways to gain immunity to the virus, scientists said.

In the interview, Rodgers fueled the controversy further by trying to distance himself from conspiracy theorists. “I’m not, you know, some sort of anti-vax, flat-earther,” he said. “I am somebody who’s a critical thinker.”

But many of his statements on the show echo those made by people in the anti-vaccine movement. “Aaron Rodgers is a smart guy,” said David O’Connor, a virologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Packers fan. But, he added, “He’s still vulnerable to the blind side blitz of misinformation.”

In the interview, Rodgers suggested that the fact that people were still getting, and dying from, Covid-19 meant that the vaccines were not highly effective.

Although imperfect, the vaccines provide extremely strong protection against the worst outcomes of infection, including hospitalization and death. Unvaccinated Americans, for instance, are [roughly 10 times as likely to be hospitalized](#) and 11 times as likely to die from Covid-19 as vaccinated Americans, according to a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“As far as the people who are in the hospital with Covid, overwhelmingly, those are unvaccinated people,” said Angela Rasmussen, a virologist at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization at the University of Saskatchewan. “And transmission is being driven overwhelmingly by unvaccinated people to other unvaccinated people.”

Rodgers also expressed concern that the vaccines might cause fertility issues, a common talking point in the anti-vaccine movement. There is [no evidence](#) that the vaccines affect fertility in men or women.

“Those allegations have been made since the vaccines first came on the scene, and they clearly have been addressed many, many times over,” said Dr. William Schaffner, a vaccine expert at Vanderbilt University. He added, “The vaccines are safe and stunningly effective.”

There are a few potentially serious adverse events that have been linked to the vaccines, including a clotting disorder and an inflammation of the heart muscle, but they are very rare. Experts agree that the health risks associated with Covid-19 overwhelmingly outweigh those of vaccination.

Rodgers said he ruled out the mRNA vaccines, manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna, because he had an allergy to an unspecified ingredient they contained.

Such allergies are possible — a small number of people are allergic to polyethylene glycol, which is in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines — but extremely rare. For instance, there were roughly [11 cases of anaphylaxis](#), a severe allergic reaction, for every million doses of the Pfizer vaccine administered, according to one C.D.C. study.

The public health agency [recommends that people](#) with a known allergy to an ingredient in one of the mRNA vaccines not get those vaccines, but some scientists expressed skepticism that Rodgers truly had a known, documented allergy. Even if he did, he may have been eligible for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which relies on a different technology.

Rodgers also took aim at the N.F.L., almost daring the league to fine him. He claimed, for instance, that the league sent a “stooge” to the Packers’ training camp to “shame” the players into getting vaccinated. He said he did not follow some protocols, like wearing a mask when speaking with reporters, because he did not agree with them.

Like many star athletes, Rodgers has worked hard to shape his own narrative. But that can come at a cost, as the pushback to his comments has shown.

“The challenge for players now is it’s so easy for them to go on podcasts and tweet,” said Brad Shear, a lawyer who advises N.F.L. players on technology and social media. “I tell players to stay on script, have notes handy and when you get a tough question, deflect. His interview was like a car crash that got worse and worse.”

Though the league has no timeline for finishing its investigation, the blowback has been swift. Prevea Health, a primary care provider in Wisconsin, [ended its partnership](#) with Rodgers the day after his interview went public. State Farm, which has employed Rodgers as a spokesman for years, [said it did not support some of the statements Rodgers](#) made (without specifying which), but that it respects “everyone’s right to make a choice.”

On Sunday, just 1.5 percent of all televised State Farm ads included Rodgers, compared to around 25 percent the previous two Sundays, [according to data collected by Apex Marketing](#), which monitors and tracks national media and branding.

[Television commentators, including the Hall of Fame quarterback Terry Bradshaw](#), also called out Rodgers for potentially putting his teammates in jeopardy and not being honest. Basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar went one step further. “Aaron Rodgers didn’t just lie he also damaged professional sports,” [he wrote](#).

Rodgers is no stranger to controversy. Through much of his 17-year N.F.L., he has created an image as a contrarian on a range of issues. In late April, [ESPN reported](#) that Rodgers was so “disgruntled” with the Packers that he told members of the team that he did not want to return to Green Bay. The team’s general manager, Brian Gutekunst, who was busy preparing for the draft, had to state publicly that Rodgers would not be traded.

Rodgers also used his knack for calculated disruption in 2020, when he tried to convince other players to vote against a proposed labor deal because it contained a path toward adding a 17th game to the regular season. (The players [narrowly approved the agreement](#).)

Rodgers has made news not just because he is an elite quarterback, but because he’s an elite quarterback in the country’s most popular sports league. Every issue is magnified when the N.F.L. is involved, whether it is bullying, domestic violence, protests during the national anthem and other issues. That’s why Rodgers’s stance on vaccines has caused so much anxiety among scientists.

Dr. O’Connor said that he “cringed” when he heard that Rodgers had not been vaccinated, especially given how many people in Wisconsin have yet to get their shots; [63 percent of state residents](#) have had at least one vaccine dose, compared to a 67 percent rate nationally.

“Within the community where he plays, there is still a lot of work to be done to improve vaccine uptake,” he said.

The timing, coming just as the vaccination campaign for young children gets underway, is particularly unfortunate, Dr. Schaffner said.

“He is such a highly regarded and highly admired sports figure,” he said of Rodgers. “We would want clear role modeling there to get the vaccine, and we certainly don’t want role modeling of duplicitous behavior.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Administration defends vaccine rules
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#us-set-to-defend-vaccine-rules-for-large-companies">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#us-set-to-defend-vaccine-rules-for-large-companies</a>

GIST	<p>The Biden administration on Monday argued that the federal government had all the power it needed to require large employers to mandate vaccination of their workers against the Covid-19 virus — or to require those who refuse the shots to wear masks and submit to weekly testing.</p> <p>In a <a href="#">28-page filing</a> before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which temporarily blocked the mandate with a nationwide stay last week, the Justice Department argued that the rule was necessarily to protect workers from the pandemic and was well grounded in law.</p> <p>Keeping the mandate from coming into effect “would likely cost dozens or even hundreds of lives per day, in addition to large numbers of hospitalizations, other serious health effects, and tremendous costs,” the Justice Department said in its filing. “That is a confluence of harms of the highest order.”</p> <p>One coalition of businesses, religious groups, advocacy organizations and several states filed a <a href="#">petition</a> on Friday with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in Louisiana, arguing that the administration overstepped its authority.</p> <p>On Saturday, a panel of the court <a href="#">temporarily blocked</a> the new mandate, <a href="#">writing</a> that “the petitions give cause to believe there are grave statutory and constitutional issues with the mandate.”</p> <p>Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House’s principal deputy press secretary, said at a news conference on Monday that the administration was recommending that businesses move forward with vaccination and testing plans, regardless of any possible delays in federal enforcement stemming from the court’s action.</p> <p>“Do not wait to take actions that will keep your workplace safe,” Ms. Jean-Pierre said.</p> <p>The stay does not have any immediate impact, because the first major deadline for complying with the mandate does not arrive until Dec. 5, when companies with at least 100 employees would have to require unvaccinated employees to wear masks indoors.</p> <p>Asked why the broad requirements of the mandate were necessary now, Ms. Jean-Pierre cited the number of people who have been dying from the coronavirus recently — an average of 1,217 deaths a day as of Sunday, according to <a href="#">a New York Times database</a>.</p> <p>“That should not be the number that we’re looking at,” Ms. Jean-Pierre said. “We believe that in order to get this pandemic behind us, we need to get more people vaccinated.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 New travel rules: confusion, exclusion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#travel-restrictions-problems">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#travel-restrictions-problems</a>
GIST	<p>When the <a href="#">U.S. travel ban on many international visitors</a> was lifted at 12:01 a.m. Eastern time on Monday, the situation may have seemed straightforward.</p> <p>“If you’re departing before that, the new rules don’t apply. If you’re departing at the time or later, you’re under the new construct,” said Sharon Pinkerton, the senior vice president for legislative and regulatory policy for Airlines for America, an industry trade group.</p> <p>But it caused considerable confusion for some eager travelers who booked overnight flights, and frustration for some who are <a href="#">being tripped up by the new rules</a>.</p> <p>Caroline Prado and Diego Paradella, a couple from Brazil, are in the first category. They had planned to celebrate their second wedding anniversary with a trip to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., but had to put it off it because of the pandemic. When the reopening was announced, they rescheduled their departure as soon as they could.</p>



They booked seats on an American Airlines flight leaving São Paulo for Miami at five minutes after midnight local time on Nov. 8.

But when Ms. Prado, 29, called the airline to double check what documentation they needed, she learned, by chance, that they would not be allowed to board: São Paulo is two hours ahead of Miami, so the flight was technically leaving before the [presidential proclamation](#) on the travel ban took effect.

The couple had already paid for a hotel, rental car and tickets to Disney World, so they decided to take a chance and go to the airport anyway. They boarded the flight without issue.

“Everything went perfectly well,” Ms. Prado said.

An American Airlines spokesman said that U.S. Customs and Border Protection gave the airline permission to allow two flights from Brazil to enter under the new framework, even though they departed before midnight. So Ms. Prado and Mr. Paradella, whose flight arrived in Miami around 7:40 a.m. on Monday, were among the first tourists from Brazil or 32 other previously banned countries to enter the United States in at least 18 months.

The new rules loosened travel restrictions for people from the previously banned countries. But for people from some other countries, they mean that entering the United States will now be more difficult.

At John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on Sunday night, the pickup area at Terminal 1 was filled with people who had arrived on the last flight from Moscow before the new rules took effect. Russia was not one of the 33 countries under the old ban, but the Russian-made Sputnik V vaccine [is not on the list of coronavirus vaccines that are now being accepted for entry to the United States](#). So the door to the United States shut for many Russians at one minute after midnight Eastern time on Monday.

A woman traveling from Russia with two young children acknowledged that the vaccine rules had affected the timing of their trip, before declining to be interviewed.

Another arriving traveler, Vyacheslav Alexov, waited for a car to collect him and his carefully plastic-wrapped luggage. He had cut short a trip to see relatives in Kazakhstan in order to make sure he was back in the United States before the new rules took effect on Monday.

As a permanent U.S. resident, he is allowed to travel in and out of the country just as American citizens can, by showing a current negative coronavirus test. But Mr. Alexov, who said he was not vaccinated, was worried that he might be blocked anyway.

“It’s political,” he said of the new policy to require foreign travelers to show proof of vaccination, but not accept the Russian vaccine.

Travelers from Colombia had not faced restrictions before Monday, but now they too must be fully vaccinated. Juan David Peláez, 43, who owns an insurance company in Bogotá, has been planning a family trip to the United States since February. Mr. Peláez, his wife and son, his parents, and his brother and sister-in-law had been set to arrive on Monday.

But Mr. Peláez said that though he is vaccinated with Moderna, he has not yet received an official vaccine certificate from the government and worried about being able to provide proof. He switched his own ticket, as well as that of his wife, who is also vaccinated, and that of his young son, to arrive on Nov. 7, a day before the rest of the group.

The changed rules “affect a lot of people who would not have been affected in the past,” said Mr. Peláez, while waiting for his family in an arrivals hall at Miami International Airport on Monday. “I would have missed out on the trip.”

HEADLINE	11/08 Tourists from Mexico as border reopens
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#mexico-us-border-reopen-tourism">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/08/world/us-travel-restrictions-ban-covid-19#mexico-us-border-reopen-tourism</a>
GIST	<p>SAN YSIDRO, Calif. — After months in which the lines at the crossing were hours long, travelers moved swiftly northward into California from Tijuana, Mexico, in the predawn hours on Monday, as tourists with proof of coronavirus vaccination joined the mix of students, essential workers and returning Americans entering the United States.</p> <p>At the San Ysidro Port of Entry, every available booth was staffed with Customs and Border Protection agents, who checked some people for proof of vaccination before waving most of them through. Only a few booths had been open during the previous 18 months, when a pandemic travel ban kept out most travelers other than American citizens and permanent residents or people with “essential needs.”</p> <p>Yadira Perdomo, who is Colombian, had received experimental medical treatment in Los Angeles but had not been able to see her doctor there for a follow-up. She crossed the border early on Monday in a wheelchair pushed by her sister Hannah Perdomo.</p> <p>Some noncitizens were able to receive medical exemptions to enter the United States during the travel ban, but the sisters wanted to cross together. They moved to Baja California two months ago to await the day when the border would open to fully vaccinated visitors. They got in line at the crossing at 3 a.m. Monday. “I feel very happy to be able to move forward with my life,” Yadira Perdomo said.</p> <p>In the days before the reopening, there was some confusion among Mexicans over which vaccines would be accepted and what proof would be required.</p> <p>Maria, who was on her way to see her granddaughter in Los Angeles and declined to give her last name, said she had received the Sinovac vaccine from China. Though the United States hasn’t authorized its use, <a href="#">the World Health Organization has</a>, so it is being accepted at the border.</p> <p>“I’m going right now because I don’t need permission to, because I can,” she said. “It’s been very sad to be apart.”</p> <p>People hoping to visit the United States waited for hours last week to apply for vaccination certificates at Health Ministry offices in Tijuana. Mexican officials encouraged people to get the certificates and be included in a national database, even though the vaccination slips given out by doctors when shots are administered would be equally valid for crossing the border.</p> <p>Carlos Gutiérrez, a dentist, didn’t want to take any chances. He waited in line for a certificate, just in case it would make a difference. “I have a lot of shopping to do — video games, clothes, things you can’t get in Mexico,” he said.</p> <p>Though all the car lanes at San Ysidro were in use on Monday, only one pedestrian entrance was open. Another, closed throughout the travel ban, is blocked by an encampment of asylum seekers, who still cannot cross freely.</p> <p>At a news conference, local officials and business leaders in San Ysidro, a section of the city of San Diego, said the reopening was badly needed on both sides of the border.</p> <p>Jason Wells, executive director of the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce, said that local businesses had suffered \$1.3 billion in lost sales because of border restrictions that he called “discrimination against tourism.”</p> <p>“We are all truly essential,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Pledge: cut emissions of health industries
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/climate/emissions-climate-change.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/climate/emissions-climate-change.html</a>
GIST	<p>More than 40 countries have pledged to cut greenhouse-gas emissions across their health systems, World Health Organization officials said late Monday, representing the largest global effort to date to try to reduce contributions by the world's hospitals and health care industry to global warming.</p> <p>"This announcement is huge," said Josh Karliner, the international director of program and strategy at Health Care Without Harm, a nonprofit that has worked to reduce the environmental impact of the health care sector. It is designed to put the industry on a path toward "net zero" emissions of greenhouse gases, he said, and "what it implies is that the way health care is provided is going to be fundamentally transformed."</p> <p>The governments of 42 countries have said they will lower their emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas that is warming the world, across their health systems. Twelve countries have pledged to reach net zero carbon dioxide emissions before 2050.</p> <p>The pledges have come from high-income countries including the United States, Britain and Germany, as well as several low- and middle-income countries that are already among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as the Bahamas, Fiji and the Maldives.</p> <p>The health care sector <a href="#">accounts for almost five percent</a> of global carbon dioxide emissions. If it were a country, it would be the fifth largest emitter.</p> <p>Many of the pledges represent initial commitments that will need to be bolstered with more specific details on how the goals might be achieved.</p> <p>At this week's global climate summit in Glasgow, the issue of <a href="#">public health has taken on a higher profile</a> than at any previous United Nations climate conference. For the first time there is a dedicated health pavilion, and a series of panels, speeches, and lectures outlining the effects of climate change on health.</p> <p>They included emotional pleas by mothers of children suffering from air pollution, including Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, who spoke with Alok Sharma, the head of the conference, on Friday and whose daughter's death from asthma was attributed to air pollution. There have also been presentations of new technologies, including the introduction of a zero-emissions ambulance.</p> <p>There is already a sizable body of research showing that <a href="#">climate change is contributing to a wide range of health risks</a> around the world. It is exacerbating heat waves, intensifying wildfires, heightening flood risks and worsening droughts. These are, in turn, increasing heat-related mortality, pregnancy complications and cardiovascular disease. And as with many things climate-related, the risks and harms are particularly severe in places that are the least able to respond.</p> <p>The United States, which accounts for more than a quarter of health-sector carbon dioxide emissions globally, joined in the commitment to clean up its health sector. Admiral Rachel Levine, the assistant secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said the government would reduce emissions at federal health facilities, which could include those operated by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and would provide incentives, guidance and assistance to privately operated health facilities to make similar reductions.</p> <p>Nineteen private health care systems in the United States have already committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>The Biden Administration has said that by 2030 the United States will aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 to 52 percent from 2005 levels across the economy. Health care accounts for 8.5 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.</p>

	<p>The federal Health and Human Services department said it planned to lay out more details Tuesday morning in a public statement in Glasgow.</p> <p>Carrying out these commitments will require countries to significantly retool their health care sectors.</p> <p>For high income countries, that would include making the health care sector more energy efficient and less wasteful, but also would likely require the transformation of overall energy grids to supply clean energy. For low- and middle-income countries, whose populations may not have regular access to health care or where health care facilities don't have reliable energy, it will likely require building new and greener facilities at the same time as they are expanding health care coverage.</p> <p>In a closed-door meeting on Monday, international funders including USAID, the World Bank, and the Green Climate Fund had an initial conversation about how they would support the commitments made by low- and middle-income countries.</p> <p>"In the midst of the pandemic, we had to recover from extreme weather events and manage the resulting health impacts," said Ifereimi Waqainabete, Fiji's Minister for Health and Medical Services, in a statement. It "has shown us that health systems and facilities are the main line of defense in protecting populations from emerging threats."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Large LA crowd protests vaccine mandate</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://ktla.com/news/local-news/large-crowd-gathers-for-protest-against-l-a-city-worker-covid-vaccine-mandate/">https://ktla.com/news/local-news/large-crowd-gathers-for-protest-against-l-a-city-worker-covid-vaccine-mandate/</a>
GIST	<p>Thousands gather outside Los Angeles City Hall Monday to protest the mandate for all city workers to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by Dec. 18.</p> <p>The vaccine requirements for city workers are meant to increase vaccination rates and stave off another deadly COVID-19 surge as the virus continues to circulate and the more-transmissible delta variant spreads.</p> <p>The group Firefighters 4 Freedom organized the rally, dubbed "A March for Freedom," saying it will be attended by firefighters, police officers, electrical workers, sanitation workers and city government employees.</p> <p>Aerial video from Sky5 showed a large crowd of people gathered in the area of 200 Main St. around 11 a.m., many carrying "thin blue line" and "thin red line" flags, and signs including ones saying "stop the mandate."</p> <p>Retired LAPD Detective Moses Castillo was attending the rally.</p> <p>"I'm here to show support for the men and women in law enforcement, the firefighters, those working in sanitation... who are here not so much against being vaccinated, or the vaccine, but they're against being forced to do so by our local government," Castillo explained.</p> <p>John Knox, of Firefighters 4 Freedom, called the mandates unconstitutional.</p> <p>"That's an overreach on the government's part, because it's not your right to tell me what I do with my health care, what I put into my body," Knox said.</p> <p>A flyer for the rally calls for participants to speak out against both local mandates and federal ones.</p> <p>The Biden Administration last week announced that Americans working at companies with 100 or more employees will need to be <a href="#">fully vaccinated by Jan. 4</a>, or get tested for the virus weekly.</p>

	<p>In L.A., Mayor Eric Garcetti <a href="#">warned</a> that city employees who don't get vaccinated by Dec. 18 "should be prepared to lose their job."</p> <p>The L.A. City Council in August <a href="#">passed an ordinance</a> requiring all city employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, unless they are granted an exemption for medical or religious reasons.</p> <p>The deadline for L.A. workers was initially set for an earlier date, but was extended by the city council to give unvaccinated workers more time to comply.</p> <p>The ordinance states that the requirement is meant to protect the city's workforce, and the public that it serves, against COVID-19, which was responsible for 26,750 deaths countywide.</p> <p>The Los Angeles firefighters union last week <a href="#">voiced their opposition</a> to the city's mandate, saying officials should allow firefighters to choose between getting the shot or tested weekly.</p> <p>Members of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City President Freddy Escobar warned that the L.A. Fire Department is already facing staffing shortages that could worsen as a result of the mandate, the L.A. Times <a href="#">reported</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Prices skyrocketing; to go even higher?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/08/economy/inflation-economy-goldman-sachs/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/08/economy/inflation-economy-goldman-sachs/index.html</a>
GIST	<p><b>New York (CNN Business)</b>Sticker shock is causing anxiety for millions of Americans right now, with prices soaring for <a href="#">gasoline</a>, groceries and used cars.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it's going to take longer than expected to work out the supply-demand imbalances <a href="#">at the heart of inflation</a>, Goldman Sachs warned clients Sunday night.</p> <p>"The inflation overshoot will likely get worse before it gets better," the bank's economists wrote in a research report.</p> <p>Like much of Wall Street and the Federal Reserve, Goldman Sachs had been anticipating high prices would swiftly come back to earth. Now, there is a realization that inflation will be sticking around longer as supply struggles to keep up with surging demand.</p> <p>Due to "prolonged" supply-demand imbalances, soaring wages and rising rent amid the housing boom, inflation metrics will remain "quite high for much of next year," Goldman Sachs conceded.</p> <p>That's bad news for Americans struggling with the high cost of living, as well as businesses squeezed by shortages and rising prices. Low-income families and those living on a fixed budget are hurt the most by rising prices on necessities like gas, food and clothing.</p> <p>The inflation forecast is also a setback for the White House because <a href="#">high prices</a> and supply chain problems are <a href="#">souring Americans' views on the US economy</a> — which had been expected to be a strongpoint for President Joe Biden this year.</p> <p>Instead, nearly two-thirds of Americans described the economy as poor in a poll released last week. Nearly half expect the economy to get worse in the next year.</p> <p><b>30-year high for inflation</b></p> <p>Annual inflation climbed at the <a href="#">fastest pace in more than 30 years</a> during September, according to the Commerce Department. That's based on the 4.4% increase in the <a href="#">personal consumption expenditures price index</a>. Excluding food and energy, core PCE, the Fed's preferred inflation metric, rose 3.6% in August and September, the fastest pace since May 1991.</p>

The Fed has now changed its tune on inflation, acknowledging that high prices won't go away anytime soon.

"We see shortages and bottlenecks persisting into next year, well into next year," Fed Chairman Jerome Powell told reporters during a press conference last week. "We see higher inflation persisting."

Everyday Americans seem to agree.

Consumers are now expecting prices to rise by 5.7% over the next year, according to a [survey released Monday by the NY Federal Reserve](#). That marks the highest level since the survey began in June 2013 and the 12th consecutive monthly increase.

The Fed watches these surveys closely because expectations of high inflation can change consumer and business behavior, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The good news is that Goldman Sachs says its core view remains that supply-demand imbalances will "largely work themselves out, leaving inflation near the Fed's goal." That jives with what Powell has said in recent weeks.

"We do not think that aggregate demand is on an unsustainable trajectory or that inflation expectations have become unanchored, and the overshoot should therefore ultimately prove transitory," Goldman Sachs economists wrote in the report.

In other words, the Fed likely won't need to slam the brakes on the economy to fight inflation through sharp interest rate hikes.

#### **Risks tilted towards more, not less, inflation**

Still, Goldman Sachs expects core PCE inflation to rise from the current 30-year high of 3.6% to 4.4% by the end of 2021. The Fed's preferred inflation metric is expected to eventually cool off to 2.3% at the end of 2022 and 2.1% at the end of 2023.

Likewise, core consumer prices are expected to remain in the mid-5% range for "much of the winter," before easing to 4% next summer and 3.2% at the end of 2022, Goldman Sachs said.

That's well above the Fed's 2% goal and may keep anxiety about the economy high.

As Powell said during his press conference, there remains vast uncertainty over the inflation outlook. No one can say for certain when prices will get back to normal.

"The risks to our forecast are probably tilted to the upside," Goldman Sachs acknowledged.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Pilots in demand; airlines hiring spree</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/pilots-in-demand-strained-airlines-hiring-spre">https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/pilots-in-demand-strained-airlines-hiring-spre</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Airlines</a> are poised for their busiest year of pilot hiring in more than three decades as the industry tries to restock a workforce reduced during the <a href="#">pandemic</a> and strained by a quick rebound in <a href="#">travel</a>.</p> <p>Travelers returned in force this year, and the boom is expected to continue as international borders reopen and corporations send workers back out on the road. After seeking to conserve cash by urging thousands of pilots to retire early, airlines are now on an unparalleled hiring spree.</p> <p>Major U.S. carriers are on track to hire around 4,200 pilots this year and more than 9,000 next year according to FAPA.aero, a Nevada-based career and financial adviser for professional pilots. That would be the busiest year for pilot hiring in more than three decades, according to FAPA's figures. In 2019, when airlines were hiring at a rapid clip, major U.S. carriers hired about 5,000 pilots.</p>



	<p>Regional airlines, where many pilots start their careers, are also on the prowl, competing to offer rich bonuses to lure new recruits.</p> <p>"There are not enough pilots out there right now to go around," said Tim Genc, chief adviser at FAPA.</p> <p>Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Eric Bensinger was getting his flight log books in order and preparing cover letters to nab a job as an airline pilot.</p> <p>Then airlines stopped hiring. Pilot training programs were suspended, young pilots without seniority faced furloughs, and older ones considered whether to cut their careers short.</p> <p>"I was getting a little concerned," Mr. Bensinger said. "I started looking at other industries."</p> <p>Over the summer, he had three job interviews and three offers, and accepted a job that offered an initial \$10,000 bonus when he starts training and an additional \$5,000 after a year. "I still can't believe it right now," Mr. Bensinger said.</p> <p>Airlines have been plagued by staffing snarls as they have emerged from their pandemic-induced pullback. Workers from baggage handlers to fuel-truck drivers have been hard to find. Retraining pilots who were out on leave or had to switch to new aircraft types has created logjams. While those shortfalls have contributed to dayslong disruptions that have upended thousands of flights, airlines say such problems are likely to be short-lived.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Report: China, Beijing Olympics repression</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/sports/beijing-olympics-get-gold-for-repression-in-labor-report">https://www.foxnews.com/sports/beijing-olympics-get-gold-for-repression-in-labor-report</a>
GIST	<p>A global trade union body has joined a long list of human-rights advocates in challenging the propriety of China holding the 2022 Winter Olympics, and has singled out the International Olympic Committee for acquiescing in the face of alleged genocide and crimes against humanity reportedly taking place in the host country.</p> <p>The Belgium-based International Trade Union Confederation issued its report Tuesday — <a href="#">"China: A gold medal for repression"</a> — highlighting human rights violations. It said a copy has been sent to IOC President Thomas Bach.</p> <p>The alleged abuses include: forced labor, jailing of trade unionists and democracy defenders in Hong Kong, intimidation of the nation's LGBTI community, and repression of ethnic and religious minorities under the pretext of "anti-separatism and counterterrorism."</p> <p>"We're trying to get the IOC to act on a basic set of principles around human rights," Sharan Burrow, the general secretary of the ITUC, told the Associated Press in an interview.</p> <p>"We want governments to take a stand in defense of their own athletes' safety, and we want sponsors to actually review their association with the Beijing Winter Olympics," she added. "You've got major companies who are supporting these Olympics who really ought to live up to values that they say they respect, which is fundamental human rights."</p> <p>Some of the <a href="#">largest sponsors</a> who collectively pay billions to the IOC include household names like Coca-Cola, Airbnb, Visa, Toyota, Alibaba, and Proctor &amp; Gamble.</p> <p>The ITUC report comes just under three months before the Olympics open on Feb. 4. There have been repeated calls for boycotts, with <a href="#">sponsors and broadcasters targeted</a>, and demands for the IOC to move the Games out of China. Protesters were also detained at a torch lighting ceremony last month in Greece.</p>



Burrow, who grew up in Australia, referenced the position of fellow Australian John Coates, the influential vice president of the IOC and a strong ally of Bach.

"John always puts the Olympics before the issue of human rights," Burrow said. "But we would hope that people like John and many others around the world who live in democratic countries would understand that it's not acceptable simply to treat China as just another nation. ... China can't just operate in the global economy without answering to the crimes they commit. People matter. People have rights."

Previous overtures from activists have been [met with mostly silence from the IOC](#) and Chinese organizers who are currently holding test events for the Games.

Enes Kanter, a center with the NBA's Boston Celtics, has been one of the few athletes to speak up about human rights violations in China, the Olympics, and the internment of at least 1 million Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in western China.

Kanter, a Muslim with roots in Turkey, has called Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "brutal dictator" and criticized human rights across a large swath of China.

Celtic games were subsequently blacked out in China, a blow to the NBA which derives millions in income from China.

Using the pandemic as the rationale, organizers and the IOC plan to implement a zero-tolerance COVID-19 policy that will also stifle unfettered media access during the Olympics.

Participants in Beijing will have to be vaccinated to enter — or quarantine for 21 days — and be subject to daily testing. Journalists will be enclosed in a "closed loop" that will limit movement. The measures will be more stringent than protocols for the just-completed Tokyo Olympics, which allowed for free movement across the country after a 14-day quarantine period.

Last week, the Foreign Correspondents Club of China in Beijing published a 31-point list of concerns about media access for the Games.

"Over the last year, the foreign press corps has been continuously stymied in its coverage of Winter Olympic Games preparations, denied attendance at routine events, and prevented from visiting sports venues in China. ... Such behavior fails to uphold the IOC's own Olympic Charter, in which Rule 48 requires the committee take 'all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Games.'"

The United States government responded to the statement.

"We urge PRC officials not to limit freedom of movement and access for journalists, and to ensure that they remain safe and able to report freely, including at the Olympic and the Paralympic Games," State Department spokesman Nick Price said in a scheduled briefing.

Several U.S. senators led by former presidential candidate Mitt Romney have proposed a diplomatic boycott by the United States that would allow U.S. athletes to attend but not U.S. government employees.

Even without a boycott, COVID-19 restrictions will severely limit who enters China.

Faced with criticism for holding the Games in China, the IOC says that it's only business is sports — not politics. The IOC has an observer seat at the United Nations.

IOC President Bach touted his efforts to bring the two Koreas together during 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Earlier this year he visited Hiroshima, using the bombed city to link the IOC to global peace. His supporters often talk of Bach as a candidate for the Nobel Prize.

	<p>Bach has said the Olympics have to be "neutral ground" although the <a href="#">Olympic Charter</a> also says the goal is to promote a "peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."</p> <p>Promises of largely unfettered access were granted grudgingly by China for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, under pressure from the IOC. It's 180-degrees different this time.</p> <p>"In 2022, it (China) does not really care about what the rest of the world thinks about it," Chinese sports historian Xu Guoqi told AP in a recent interview.</p> <p>"Now it tries its best to tell the world its intentions. If the world does not listen, so be it."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 WHO warns US: Europe under Covid siege</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-europe-cases-surge-deaths-vaccination-vaccine-hesitancy/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-europe-cases-surge-deaths-vaccination-vaccine-hesitancy/</a>
GIST	<p>London — The coronavirus has been resurging across Europe, including in some places where it was thought to be well under control. A top world health official tells CBS News the trend shows that success today does not necessarily mean success tomorrow, and the United States should pay close attention.</p> <p>Europe has seen a jump of more than 50% in new coronavirus cases over the last month, and the World Health Organization has warned the continent could see another half of a million deaths by February. CBS News senior foreign correspondent Charlie D'Agata spoke with the top official ringing those alarm bells, who told him there's "grave concern" as Europe is once again under siege by COVID-19.</p> <p>"If you look at the last four weeks, the hospitalizations have doubled," Dr. Hans Kluge, the World Health Organization's Regional Director for Europe, told CBS News.</p> <p>He said vaccination uptake has plateaued in some parts of Europe and, "at the same time, there's a relaxation of the public health and social measures, which is a cocktail for what we see: a fourth wave."</p> <p>Kluge called Europe "the epicenter" of a new global COVID-19 outbreak, fuelled by the highly transmissible Delta variant of the virus.</p> <p>While case rates are up across the continent, European countries with higher vaccination uptake appear to be staving off a major new wave of severe COVID-19 illness, but in some Eastern European nations, the daily mortality rate is surging.</p> <p>Portugal has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, for instance, whereas Romania has one of the lowest in Europe — and one the highest death rates on the globe.</p> <p>On Monday, Germany's daily infection rate hit its highest recorded level since the pandemic began.</p> <p>"Vaccines are a game changer," said Kluge. But alone, they are "not enough."</p> <p>"We need to keep pressure on the virus, not surrendering on masks, the hand-washing, indoor ventilation — particularly in the schools," he told D'Agata.</p> <p>In the U.K., the virus' spread in schools — where face masking and most other anti-virus mandates were dropped from the beginning of this academic year — is being blamed for rising case numbers. The rise, while not mirrored in hospitalizations or deaths, is stoking fear that another lockdown could be looming this winter.</p> <p>"I think they can see it coming. But it's that fine line between letting people go about their daily lives and also trying to keep people safe," said Toni Watkins as she shopped on London's Oxford Street, acknowledging the difficult calculus the British government and others across Europe are facing.</p>

	<p>Kluge told CBS News that Americans should "absolutely" be paying close attention to the situation in Europe right now — and taking lessons from it.</p> <p>"The basic principle is, if there is a situation where the peak is accelerating, don't wait" to bring back anti-virus measures, and "the earlier, the stricter, the better."</p> <p>D'Agata asked Kluge what that could mean for the fast-approaching Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. He said people should celebrate, but safely — trying to keep numbers down when different households mix, and he stressed the need to "vaccinate and ventilate."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Covid killing police yet officers refusing vax</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-is-nations-biggest-cop-killer-officers-vaccine-resistant/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-is-nations-biggest-cop-killer-officers-vaccine-resistant/</a>
GIST	<p>A Homeland Security officer in Georgia and a deputy sheriff in Kentucky are among the nearly two dozen law enforcement officers who died last month of COVID-19, now the leading cause of job-related deaths among U.S. police professionals. Yet even as COVID-19 kills far more cops than gunfire, those whose duty it is to serve and protect the public are <a href="#">among the most resistant</a> to getting vaccinated.</p> <p>From California to New York, unions representing law enforcement are fighting requirements that members get immunized against the coronavirus, which has killed more than 500 officers since the pandemic began. While law enforcement officers were among the first front-line workers to be offered <a href="#">coronavirus vaccines</a>, their vaccination rates by most accounts remain at or below the public at large.</p> <p>While Americans employed in law enforcement are not alone in resisting vaccination, the outcry from their ranks to vaccine mandates has been particularly virulent. Unions and others speaking for police officers are taking umbrage as some U.S. cities and counties enact vaccine mandates for government employees.</p> <p>"It's a sad situation that we're in, that something that can protect their lives and everyone else's has become such a point of resistance," said Sandra Crouse Quinn, a professor of family science at the University of Maryland who has studied how communication plays a part in vaccine acceptance.</p> <p>Mandates work best with education and dialogue, "so officers with questions about the vaccine have opportunities to talk to health care providers. I don't know to what extent that's happening," Quinn added.</p> <p>The ongoing battles are playing out as the death toll from COVID-19 continues to rise on a nearly daily basis. At least 21 officers died in the month of October alone after contracting the virus on the job, <a href="#">according to</a> the Officer Down Memorial Page, or ODMP, a nonprofit dedicated to honoring the nation's fallen law enforcement officers.</p> <p>Those who've died in recent weeks after contracting COVID-19 at work include Victor Donate, 58, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer who became infected while assigned to Atlanta International Airport. The former U.S. Navy pilot is survived by a wife and three kids, <a href="#">according to</a> the Department of Homeland Security.</p> <p>The recent deaths also include 31-year-old officer Kris Hutchison, who contracted COVID-19 while working at the Haltom Middle School in Haltom City, Texas. The Marine Corps veteran died on October 27 after four weeks in a hospital ICU, <a href="#">according to</a> a local CBS affiliate. In Kentucky, Floyd County Deputy Sheriff Oliver Little died at 46 on October 13, just <a href="#">weeks after contracting COVID-19</a> in the line of duty.</p> <p>The virus killed more police officers nationwide last year than all other causes combined, according to <a href="#">data</a> from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. Coronavirus also was the most common cause of duty-related deaths in <a href="#">2020</a> and <a href="#">2021</a>, according to the ODMP.</p>

In Pennsylvania's second most populated city, a standoff over a vaccine requirement coincided with reports of a [third Pittsburgh police officer dying of COVID-19](#) within the last month. Pittsburgh on November 1 [announced](#) that all of its workers must be vaccinated by December 22, prompting the union representing police to file a grievance and unfair labor practice.

Bob Swartzwelder, president of the Fraternal Order of Police Fort Pitt Loge No. 1, which represents 906 active Pittsburgh police officers, told CBS MoneyWatch on Monday the city had a responsibility to negotiate before ordering his members to get the shots.

"I'm pro-vaccine but I'm anti-mandate," said Swartzwelder, who described himself as fully vaccinated.

The city has already lost 78 officers to retirement, resignation or death this year, and another 257 are eligible to retire, and the mandate may well hasten their decision to leave, Swartzwelder warned. "It takes 18 months to fully train a police officer and put them on the street. You already have a police department in crisis."

The union leader questioned how the city can demand workers be vaccinated yet allow protests, parades, football games and "all these non-critical events to occur."

In Chicago, the police union scored a victory in its fight against a policy requiring its officers to be vaccinated by the end of the year, with a Cook County judge on November 1 [suspending the city's mandate](#). Chicago officers, however, are still required to report their vaccination status and get tested twice a week if unvaccinated.

Local CBS 2 Legal Analyst Irv Miller called the decision a partial win for both sides.

"The city gets to keep their mandate about reporting whether you've been vaccinated, and the [Fraternal Order of Police] got rid of the December 31 order – which could have resulted in a lot of terminations," Miller said.

FOP Union President John Catanzara last Wednesday continued to call for rank-and-file resistance: "The goal now is to have over 1,000 or 2,000 officers subject themselves to disobeying a direct order. They can never process that many," he stated in a [video](#) posted on YouTube.

Catanzara did not return a request from CBS MoneyWatch for further comment.

According to data from the city, 3,435 officers and civilian CPD employees had yet to report their vaccination status as of Monday, 300 fewer than a week earlier. Chicago Police superintendent David Brown on November 1 said 35 officers had been stripped of their powers for refusing a direct order to provide their statuses.

Equally abrasive, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva called a news conference last [Tuesday](#) to blast a vaccine mandate as a public safety threat, saying it would spur an exodus of deputies from his department.

While acknowledging that 15 members of his department have died of COVID-19, Villanueva has for weeks said he would not force his deputies to get inoculated, saying the decision should be left to individuals.

"People just don't have faith in the vaccine, some of it is driven by a political ideology, some of it might be irrational, [and] some people might have a legitimate reason why they don't trust the vaccine," Villanueva said at a news conference on Tuesday. "And in a department in this profession, which tends to be dominated by people with a more conservative leaning, this is what you expect."

The sheriff's department declined further comment, and the union representing his deputies did not respond to a request for comment.

Michel Moore, chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, is taking a decidedly different approach to the mandate, and has agreed to enforce the rules. The differing stances of the two are reflected in the vaccination figures from their respective departments. About 53% of 16,070 Sheriff's Department workers — sworn officers as well as civilian — had at least one vaccination shot, versus 74% of employees at the LAPD.

The LAPD did not offer further comment, and its union representing its officers did not respond to a request for comment.

### **Cops don't like being told what to do**

The reasons why those in law enforcement resist getting vaccinated against COVID-19 mirror the sentiments voiced across the country, much of it political in nature. But an overriding theme, it seems, is that nobody likes being ordered to do something, and cops are no exception. Further, police officers face danger on a regular basis, allowing some of them to brush off the threat from COVID-19.

While many police officers believe they are young and healthy enough to survive infections, "others don't want to be told what to do," Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, which advises police departments around the nation.

The notion that mandates infringe on individual rights has overtaken the larger public health and safety concerns, according to Wexler.

"Officers are getting sick and dying and yet you would think that they would be 100% getting vaccinated," he said. "This is about health and safety, that's what's lost in this discussion. You have to ask yourself, is this really the kind of issue you would resign over?"

Still, the warnings that mandates would deplete the ranks and lead to chaos are not exactly playing out.

"People generally like feeling like they have a choice, and mandates can be frustrating in many circumstances, but that doesn't mean they don't work," Adam Galinsky, a professor of leadership at Columbia Business School, told CBS MoneyWatch.

That is proving to be the case in New York City, where more than 92% of 160,500 city workers impacted by the city's vaccine mandate were compliant as of November 3. That's up from 84% on October 20, when the rules affecting police officers and firefighters were announced.

The union representing NYPD officers did not return a request for comment.

Decades of research has shown that pragmatic concerns can outweigh a strong point of view, Columbia's Galinsky said.

"People can express attitudes, but when the moment comes to make a decision with a cost or tangible impact — you can't always predict behavior from an attitude," he explained.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Germany Covid infection rate new high
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/german-covid-infection-rate-high-vaccinations-slow-81029857">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/german-covid-infection-rate-high-vaccinations-slow-81029857</a>
GIST	BERLIN -- Germany's coronavirus infection rate climbed to its highest recorded level yet on Monday as what officials have called a “pandemic of the unvaccinated” gathers pace.

The national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said the country has seen 201.1 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days. That was above the previous record of 197.6 from Dec. 22 last year. While it's still a lower rate than in several other European countries, it has set alarm bells ringing.

The seven-day infection rate has long ceased to be the only policy yardstick in Germany, with new hospital admissions now an important factor. Those are currently at just under 4 per 100,000 residents over a week — compared with a peak of about 15.5 last Christmas — but officials say hospitals are filling up in badly affected areas.

The disease control center said Monday that 15,513 new COVID-19 cases were reported over the past 24 hours — down from a record 37,120 on Friday, but figures are typically lower after the weekend. Another 33 deaths were recorded, bringing Germany's total to 96,558.

Germany has struggled to find ways to pep up its much-slowed vaccination campaign. At least 67% of the population of 83 million is fully vaccinated, according to official figures, which authorities say isn't enough. Unlike some other European countries, it has balked at making vaccinations mandatory for any professional group.

As at many times during the pandemic, Germany has a patchwork of regional rules. Most places restrict access to many indoor facilities and events to people who have been vaccinated, have recovered or been tested — with the latter now being excluded in some areas. Those rules are often enforced laxly.

Rules on whether schoolchildren must wear masks in class vary from state to state.

Free rapid tests for all were scrapped nearly a month ago in an effort to incentivize more people to get vaccinated. There are now widespread calls for them to be reintroduced. And officials now advocate booster vaccinations for everyone who got their initial shots six months ago or more.

Germany currently has a caretaker national government after its election in September. The parties that are expected to form the next government plan to bring legislation to parliament this week that would allow an “epidemic situation of national scope,” in place since March 2020, to expire at the end of the month but provide a new legal framework for coronavirus measures.

There has been criticism of that decision. But Katrin Goering-Eckardt, the parliamentary leader of one of those parties, the Greens, told ARD television that “we need to create measures now that can't be questioned by courts.”

She argued that, with two-thirds of residents vaccinated, the current rules weren't legally waterproof.

Schools and other facilities can be closed if necessary, but “with so many people vaccinated, we won't be able legally to do a complete lockdown for those who are vaccinated,” Goering-Eckardt said.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Slovakia amid surge expands restrictions
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/slovaks-expand-restrictions-plan-amid-record-surge-81031037">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/slovaks-expand-restrictions-plan-amid-record-surge-81031037</a>
GIST	<p>PRAGUE -- Slovakia on Monday expanded strict coronavirus restrictions including hotel, bar and restaurant closures to almost a half of the country amid a record surge of infections.</p> <p>The government is expected to discuss additional measures as the country's health minister joined medical personnel who treat COVID-19 patients in urging Slovaks to get vaccinated.</p> <p>“Only vaccination can take us through the pandemic,” Health Minister Vladimir Lengvarsky said.</p> <p>The measures will affect 36 of the country's 79 counties. Indicative of how fast infections are spreading, only five counties had imposed the measures three weeks ago, and another five a week later.</p>



On top of the hotel, bar and restaurant closures, people will be allowed to only buy takeout meals. Fitness, wellness and aquatic centers also have been shuttered.

The maximum number allowed at public gatherings has been reduced to 100 fully vaccinated people. Face masks are compulsory indoors and outdoors.

Slovakia, which has a population of nearly 5.5 million people, is one of the countries in the European Union that have been hardest hit by the pandemic. It has registered around 457,431 cases and 12,917 deaths.

Daily infections have set three new records within last week, with the most recent of 6,805 cases being set on Thursday.

The government's advisory group of health experts has proposed new restrictions such as limits on the movements of the unvaccinated in a bid to forestall a potential collapse of the health system.

About 80% of the 2,108 people who currently need hospitalization in Slovakia were either partially vaccinated or haven't received a shot at all. Many hospitals have started to only treat COVID-19 patients.

Slovakia has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the EU. Less than half, or 2.41 million people, have been fully vaccinated.

"The vaccination could have prevented most of the deaths," a petition signed by some 1,300 medical personnel and the health minister said. "Amid worries that the worst is yet to come, we are asking you to get vaccinated."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Russians back to work; cases, deaths high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/russians-back-work-virus-cases-deaths-stay-high-81033309">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/russians-back-work-virus-cases-deaths-stay-high-81033309</a>
GIST	<p>MOSCOW -- Russians went back to work on Monday after a mandated, nine-day break with authorities expressing uncertainty whether the measure helped tame a record-breaking surge of coronavirus infections and deaths.</p> <p>Daily tallies of new cases and COVID-19 deaths remained high throughout the non-working period. Officials in the Kremlin said that it was too early to tell whether the measure had the desired effect.</p> <p>"Too early to draw a conclusion. It will be clear in about a week," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.</p> <p>Russia's coronavirus task force reported 39,400 new infections and 1,190 deaths on Monday — slightly lower than the record 41,335 new cases registered on Saturday and the record 1,195 deaths reported on Thursday. Russia has the worst death toll in Europe by far, and is one of the top five hardest-hit nations in the world.</p> <p>The task force has been reporting around 40,000 new cases and over 1,100 new deaths each day since late October.</p> <p>Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered many Russians to stay off work between Oct. 30 and Nov. 7. He authorized regional governments to extend the number of non-working days if necessary, but only five Russian regions have done so.</p> <p>Others have restricted attendance to public places, such as restaurants, theaters and cinemas, to those who either have been fully vaccinated, have recovered from COVID-19 within the last six months or tested negative in the previous 72 hours.</p>

Russia's autumn surge in infections and deaths comes amid low vaccination rates, lax public attitudes toward taking precautions and the government's reluctance to toughen restrictions.

Less than 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though Russia approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine months before most countries.

According to Gogov.ru, a independent website that tracks vaccinations in Russia, the immunization rate went up in mid-October and almost reached peak levels recorded between June and August when dozens of Russian regions mandated vaccinations for certain groups of people. The rate had dropped again as of Thursday.

In all, Russia's coronavirus task force has reported more than 8.8 million confirmed cases and over 248,000 deaths.

However, reports by Russia's statistical service Rosstat that tally coronavirus-linked deaths retroactively reveal much higher mortality numbers: 462,000 people with COVID-19 died between April 2020 and September this year.

Russian officials have said the task force only includes deaths for which COVID-19 was the main cause and uses data from medical facilities. Rosstat uses wider criteria for counting virus-related deaths and takes its numbers from civil registry offices where registering a death is finalized.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Railroads fight unions: vaccine mandates</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/railroads-fight-unions-court-vaccine-mandates-81044788">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/railroads-fight-unions-court-vaccine-mandates-81044788</a>
GIST	<p>OMAHA, Neb. -- Another major railroad has gone to court to determine whether it has the authority to require all its employees to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.</p> <p>BNSF railroad filed a lawsuit Sunday against its major unions over its mandate. It joins Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific, which both filed similar lawsuits against the unions last month. The unions, which have filed some of their own lawsuits in response, argue that the railroads should have negotiated with them before imposing their mandates.</p> <p>The railroads that have imposed vaccine mandates say they are complying with President Joe Biden's executive order requiring all federal contractors to have their employees vaccinated. The railroads are not alone in facing resistance to vaccine mandates. Similar rules have generated disputes in a variety of workplaces.</p> <p>BNSF said in its lawsuit that it regularly updates its requirements for workers when federal regulations change, so the vaccine mandate should be no different. BNSF said the unions don't dispute when it changes drug testing rules, and they didn't fight it earlier this year when the railroad imposed a mask mandate after the Federal Railroad Administration ordered it.</p> <p>"BNSF has a long-standing and well-settled past practice of unilaterally changing its rules and policies governing position requirements, medical standards, and safety in response to lawful federal government directives," the railroad said in its lawsuit.</p> <p>The railroads have said that employees will be disciplined if they fail to comply with the vaccine mandate.</p> <p>The unions didn't immediately respond in court to BNSF's lawsuit Monday, but in the other lawsuits they have argued the railroads were violating the terms of their contract by requiring vaccines and by offering bonuses to workers if they do get vaccinated. Both Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern are offering employees \$300 if they get the shots.</p>

	<p>“The non-negotiated bonuses and unilateral decision to discipline employees who are not vaccinated functioned to undermine the collectively-bargained agreements and reduce Norfolk Southern’s obligations under those agreements,” the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers — Transportation Division, or SMART-TD, union said in its response to Norfolk Southern.</p> <p>Leaders of the SMART-TD union and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen have said they generally support workers getting vaccinated, but they don't think the railroads should require it without negotiating first.</p> <p>Federal judges have yet to rule on any of these lawsuits related to the railroads' vaccine requirements.</p> <p>BNSF, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific are three of the largest U.S. railroads. Spokeswomen for two other major U.S. railroads, CSX and Kansas City Southern, said officials at those railroads are still considering whether to impose vaccine mandates in response to the executive order, but both railroads are encouraging employees to get the shots.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 France muscle-flex: frigate in eastern Med</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/france-flexes-muscle-puts-warship-eastern-mediterranean-81034811">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/france-flexes-muscle-puts-warship-eastern-mediterranean-81034811</a>
GIST	<p>NICOSIA, Cyprus -- France showcased its military muscle Monday with a tour of its new frigate Auvergne in the eastern Mediterranean, seeking to underscore what the ship's captain said was the importance that Paris attaches to ensuring security and stability in the region.</p> <p>Captain Paul Merveilleux de Vignaux said the Auvergne with its 150-strong crew would be deployed in the eastern Mediterranean until January to gather intelligence in order to “show how the respect of international law and especially freedom of navigation matters” to France.</p> <p>“This deployment underlines how important France considers this part of the Mediterranean sea,” as well as the country’s “willingness to contribute to the stabilization of this strategic area,” De Vignaux told reporters at the Cypriot port of Larnaca.</p> <p>The Auvergne was commissioned three years ago. It has advanced sonar equipment and specializes in anti-submarine warfare.</p> <p>De Vignaux said this is the 12th time that the Auvergne has visited Cyprus, which he called as key to supporting French naval operations in the region.</p> <p>“There can’t be efficient and sustainable naval operations without support and Cyprus is the centerpiece of it,” De Vignaux said.</p> <p>The French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle has also made repeated trips to Cyprus.</p> <p>Relations between Cyprus and France have been growing tighter in recent years. Cyprus also permits French aircraft to use its military air base in the southeastern corner of the island nation and allows French ships to use its southern naval port, which is now undergoing an upgrade.</p> <p>France is also keen to make its presence felt to send signals to Turkey not to interfere with offshore drilling by French energy company Total and its Italian partner Eni next year in waters off Cyprus’ southern coast.</p> <p>Turkey doesn’t recognize Cyprus as a nation and contests waters where the Cypriot government claims exclusive economic rights. Ankara says a large chunk of those waters either overlap its continental shelf or belong to the breakaway Turkish Cypriots.</p>

	<p>Cyprus was split in 1974 when Turkey invaded after a coup by supporters of union with Greece. Only Turkey recognizes a 1983 Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in the island's northern third where it maintains more than 35,000 troops.</p> <p>In February 2018, Turkish warships prevented a drill ship leased by Eni from conducting exploratory drilling in waters southeast of Cyprus.</p> <p>Political analyst Anna Koukkides-Procopiou says the French naval presence is a clear signal to Turkey.</p> <p>“(French President Emmanuel) Macron needs to project this power in the region, because this is part of his whole policy of establishing or re-establishing France as a great power, which is not only dominant in the region of the Middle East, but (in) Africa,” Koukkides-Procopiou told The Associated Press.</p> <p>“Someone had to move in and fill that vacuum (in the eastern Mediterranean). Now France wants to make sure that it’s not Turkey,” she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Bosnia presidency: no more wars</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-envoy-bosnias-presidency-pledges-wars-81035108">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-envoy-bosnias-presidency-pledges-wars-81035108</a>
GIST	<p>SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina -- Members of Bosnia’s collective presidency have offered assurances that there will be no repeat of ethnic clashes in the war-scarred nation, a senior U.S. diplomat said on Monday, despite deep tensions triggered by Bosnian Serb separatist moves.</p> <p>“The most important thing that we agreed with all of the interlocutors that we met with today is that we all agree that there will be no war and that’s the most important message,” said U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Gabriel Escobar after his meetings with Bosniak, Serb and Croat presidency members.</p> <p>“And that’s not just the message that you are going to hear from all of the leaders that I met with today, but you are going to hear this from regional leaders as well,” he added.</p> <p>The Bosnian War started in 1992 when Bosnian Serbs, with the help of the Yugoslav army, tried to create ethnically pure territories with an aim of joining neighboring Serbia. More than 100,000 people were killed and millions were left homeless during the worst bloodshed in Europe after World War II.</p> <p>The 1992-1995 war pitted Bosniaks, who are mostly Muslims, Serbs and Croats against each other and ended with the U.S.-sponsored peace agreement that created two regions - the Republika Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. The two regions were given wide autonomy, but some joint institutions were kept including the army, the top judiciary and tax administration.</p> <p>Escobar’s visit comes a week after the chief international representative in Bosnia, German diplomat Christian Schmidt, warned that the 1995 peace deal that stopped the bloody civil war could unravel. Schmidt also warned that Balkan nation could break up if the international community does not curb threatened separatist actions by Bosnian Serb leader and presidency member Milorad Dodik.</p> <p>Dodik, who has tacit support from Russia and Serbia, recently intensified his campaign, pledging that the Bosnian Serb parliament would by the end of November prepare laws allowing for the creation of its own army, tax authority and judiciary.</p> <p>After separate talks with Dodik and the other two presidency members - Croat Zeljko Komsic and Bosniak Safik Dzaferovic - Escobar said “the thing we wanted to make sure is that Bosnia remains independent sovereign and territorially whole.”</p> <p>The U.S. official said Bosnia needs political stability to help integrate the Balkans economically and prepare them for eventual membership to the European Union.</p>

	<p>Escobar said he had “a productive meeting with Mr. Dodik where he was open to discussing withdrawing all of the legislation that would weaken the central institutions.”</p> <p>But Dodik said on Monday that the Bosnian Serb parliament would continue drafting laws withdrawing support for the joint army, judiciary and tax collection.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 Egypt, Israel agreement on Sinai forces</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-israel-agree-egypt-border-forces-sinai-81037629">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/egypt-israel-agree-egypt-border-forces-sinai-81037629</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>CAIRO -- Egypt and Israel said Monday they agreed on an increase in Egyptian border forces in a restive northern part of the Sinai Peninsula, where Egypt has battled Islamic militants for years.</p> <p>The Egyptian military said a joint military committee with Israel agreed to amend a security deal between the two countries, allowing Cairo to increase the number and capabilities of border guards in the town of Rafah.</p> <p>The military was apparently referring to security arrangements linked to the peace treaty the neighboring countries signed in 1979. It said the new arrangements were part of the military’s efforts to secure the country’s northeastern borders.</p> <p>Israel’s military said in a separate statement the amendment was signed during the committee’s meeting Sunday, allowing Egypt to increase its military presence in the area. Neither country’s military gave additional details.</p> <p>Egypt was the first Arab country to reach a peace agreement with Israel, but only after the two countries fought four wars between 1948 to 1973. The agreement put restrictions on Egypt’s military presence in towns bordering Israel.</p> <p>The announcement comes after years of coordination between Egypt and Israel to contain the common threat posed by militant groups operating in Sinai. The Israelis are believed to have granted every request by Egypt to bring additional forces into the region, as long as all operations were closely coordinated.</p> <p>Egypt has battled militants in northern Sinai for years, but attacks against its military and police have expanded since the military removed Islamist President Mohammed Morsi in 2013 amid mass protests against his divisive rule.</p> <p>Egypt’s military under President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi has managed in recent years to prevent large-scale attacks in Sinai and elsewhere in the country.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 Congo: rebels attack base; ongoing fighting</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hundreds-flee-uganda-amid-fighting-eastern-congo-81032495">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/hundreds-flee-uganda-amid-fighting-eastern-congo-81032495</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>KINSHASA, Congo -- Congo’s military says that members of the M23 rebellion group have attacked a base in eastern Congo’s Rutshuru area and that fighting is ongoing.</p> <p>“The M23 insurrection movement attacked the FARDC positions in Rutshuru with the intention of destabilizing the province. At present, the fighting is underway and the loyalist forces are determined to put an end to this armed group once and for all,” said Gen. Sylvain Ekenge, deputy spokesman for Congo’s military, also known as FARDC.</p> <p>The rebels attacked the remote villages of Runyonyi and Chanzu, on the strategic hills of North Kivu province near the borders with Rwanda and Uganda, he said. The rebels had taken over lands near there in 2012 and were pushed from the area into Uganda and Rwanda in 2013 by Congolese and United Nations forces.</p>

	<p>The M23 group, however, denied that they are behind the attacks or fighting with the military or government in a statement Monday.</p> <p>The fighting has caused large numbers of people to flee to Uganda, according to the Uganda Red Cross.</p> <p>The group said Monday it deployed a team to assess needs among people fleeing the fighting overnight. Hundreds are camping at the border post of Bunagana, seeking shelter in Uganda, spokeswoman Irene Nakasiita said.</p> <p>Ugandan authorities didn't immediately comment. The East African country is home to 1.3 million refugees who fled violence in neighboring countries such as South Sudan.</p> <p>Eastern Congo is prone to insecurity with fighting between rival armed groups, including rebels opposed to the government in the capital, Kinshasa. In recent years an armed group with roots in Uganda has been blamed for a series of attacks on civilians in the region.</p> <p>In a security alert Sunday, the U.S. Embassy in Congo noted "reports of a potential attack in Goma," the capital of North Kivu province. "There is increased security presence throughout the city," the advisory said, adding that U.S. government personnel in the area were advised to shelter in place.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Iran general in Baghdad after Iraq PM attack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/powerful-iranian-general-visited-iraq-attack-pm-81032485">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/powerful-iranian-general-visited-iraq-attack-pm-81032485</a>
GIST	<p>BAGHDAD -- A top Iranian general visited Baghdad after the assassination attempt against Iraq's prime minister, and said Tehran and its allies had nothing to do with the drone attack that lightly injured the Iraqi leader, two Iraqi politicians said Monday.</p> <p>News of the visit came as an Iraqi army general said the investigation into the drone attack against Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi is ongoing but that indications point to Iran-backed factions. The general said Monday the drones used in the attack took off from areas east of the capital where Iran-backed militias have influence.</p> <p>The drone attack was also similar to ones carried out in the past by Iran-backed factions in Iraq. In September, for example, explosives-laden drones targeted the Irbil international airport in the country's north, where U.S.-led coalition troops are stationed, the army general told The Associated Press. He commented on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to the media.</p> <p>Gen. Frank McKenzie, the commander of U.S. Central Command, told the Washington-based Arabic-language Alhurra TV that the attack against al-Kadhimi was a criminal act carried out by Iranian-backed militias. McKenzie spoke in English with Arabic voiceover.</p> <p>The two Shiite Muslim politicians requested anonymity because Esmail Ghaani's visit was not announced publicly. They quoted the Iranian general as saying that Tehran is not opposed to any politician named by the Shiite blocs in the newly elected parliament to become the next prime minister.</p> <p>Ghaani is the commander of Iran's Quds Force, which is mainly responsible for military and clandestine operations outside the country.</p> <p>Iran enjoys wide influence in Iraq through powerful militias it has been backing for years. Iran and Iraq both have majority Shiite populations.</p> <p>The failed assassination attempt against al-Kadhimi at his residence has ratcheted up tensions following last month's parliamentary elections, in which the Iran-backed militias were the biggest losers.</p>



Al-Kadhimi suffered a light cut and appeared in a televised speech soon after the attack on his residence wearing a white shirt and what appeared to be a bandage around his left wrist. Seven of his security guards were wounded in the attack by at least two armed drones.

There was no claim of responsibility but suspicion immediately fell on Iran-backed militias. They had been blamed for previous attacks on the Green Zone, which also houses foreign embassies.

The militia leaders condemned the attack, but most sought to downplay it.

The two Iraqi politicians quoted Ghaani as saying: "Iran has nothing to do with this attack."

One of the two officials said Ghaani met with al-Kadhimi on Sunday afternoon in Baghdad.

Lebanon's Al-Manar TV, which is run by the Iran-backed Hezbollah group, said Ghaani also met with Iraqi President Barham Salih and other political figures in the country.

It quoted Ghaani as saying during his visit that "Iraq is in urgent need for calm." It added that Ghaani also said that any act that threatens Iraq's security should be avoided.

The drone attack was a dramatic escalation in the already tense situation following the Oct. 10 vote and the surprising results in which Iran-backed militias lost about two-thirds of their seats.

Despite a low turnout, the results confirmed a rising wave of discontent against the militias that had been praised years before as heroes for fighting Islamic State militants.

But the militias have lost popularity since 2018, when they made big election gains. Many Iraqis hold them responsible for suppressing the 2019 youth-led anti-government protests, and for undermining state authority.

Some analysts have said that Sunday's attack aimed to cut off the path that could lead to a second al-Kadhimi term by those who lost in the recent elections.

On Sunday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned the assassination attempt on al-Kadhimi and indirectly blamed the U.S.

Al-Kadhimi, 54, was Iraq's former intelligence chief before becoming prime minister in May last year. He is considered by the militias to be close to the U.S., and has tried to balance between Iraq's alliances with both the U.S. and Iran.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Deadly attacks: Eritrean soldiers in Tigray</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/people-fleeing-ethiopia-allege-attacks-forced-conscription-81030753">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/people-fleeing-ethiopia-allege-attacks-forced-conscription-81030753</a>
GIST	<p>NAIROBI, Kenya -- A new round of deadly attacks and forced conscription has begun against ethnic Tigrayans in an area of Ethiopia now controlled by Amhara regional authorities in collaboration with soldiers from neighboring Eritrea, people fleeing over the border to Sudan tell The Associated Press as the yearlong war intensifies.</p> <p>Urgent diplomatic meetings with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Tigray leader Debretsion Gebremichael in an attempt to calm the fighting have found a small "window of opportunity" as the rival sides agreed a political solution through dialogue was required, African Union envoy Olesegun Obasanjo said in briefings Monday. The State Department said U.S. envoy Jeffrey Feltman saw a window to act with Obasanjo and was meeting with him in Ethiopia's capital Monday night.</p>

Tigray forces have been approaching Addis Ababa to press the prime minister to step aside, leading Ethiopia's government to declare a state of emergency last week while the U.S. and other countries urged citizens to leave immediately. The war has killed thousands after political tensions with the Tigray forces who once dominated the national government turned deadly.

Those fleeing the western Tigray communities of Adebay and Humera in the past week described warnings from Amhara authorities against supporting the Tigray forces. The accounts confirm warnings by the U.S. and others that Eritrean soldiers remain in the Tigray region, and they indicate that pressure is growing on Tigrayans of mixed heritage who have tried to live quietly amid what the U.S. has alleged as ethnic cleansing in western Tigray.

As reports grew about the Tigray forces' momentum, Amhara authorities at a public meeting in Adebay on Oct. 29 warned residents against supporting them, two men who fled to Sudan said.

"There are people working for (the Tigray forces). You should give them to us or we will kill you all together," one who fled, 28-year-old Mawcha Asmelash, recalled authorities saying.

Five days later, he said, Amhara militia attacked. "I saw four people being killed on the run," he said.

He and other men hid in the bush for two days, gathering information from local women and trying to judge whether it was safe to return. But the women estimated scores of men had been killed and residents had been forbidden to bury their bodies. The women urged them to flee.

Another man who fled Adebay, 36-year-old Berhane Gebremikael, confirmed the public meeting. He said he saw one man killed as he ran from Amhara militia and the Eritrean soldiers, who he said have a camp in the community.

"They called it revenge," he said. He described a perilous situation for Tigrayan residents of Adebay who had remained during the war, with many changing their identity, paying bribes or using mixed heritage for a measure of protection. Berhane, whose mother is Eritrean, now fears he can't return.

"Maybe the worst things will happen in the next days," he said. "The international community should intervene."

A man who fled to Sudan from the city of Humera, near the Eritrean border, told the AP he had stayed there because of his part-Tigrayan heritage, but last week Amhara authorities "started collecting people. Young men and boys are being forced to join the fighting."

Again, it started with a public warning, 28-year-old Alemu Abraha said. Then Amhara authorities, along with Eritrean soldiers, started visiting homes at night to take people away. His friends were taken, he said, and he believes the men are being sent to the Amhara region, where most fighting has occurred in recent months.

Amhara regional spokesman Gizachew Muluneh did not respond to AP questions. Amhara regional officials have asserted that western Tigray is historically their land, and during the war witnesses and humanitarian workers have described scores of thousands of Tigrayans forced from communities there.

Meanwhile, reports of mass detentions of Tigrayans continue under the state of emergency. An Ethiopian Orthodox Church official in Addis Ababa, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution, said dozens of priests, monks, deacons and others had been detained in the capital because of their ethnicity. Ethiopian authorities have said they are detaining people suspected of supporting the Tigray forces.

The government-created Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in a statement noted with concern that "arrests appeared to be based on ethnicity" and included the elderly and mothers with children.

	<p>As the war closes in, Ethiopia's government insists that life in the capital remains normal. On Sunday, scores of thousands of people rallied in Addis Ababa in a show of support, some carrying signs criticizing the international community, including foreign media.</p> <p>On Monday, AU envoy Obasanjo, a former Nigerian president, told the AU Peace and Security Council he saw a window of opportunity after meeting separately with Ethiopia's prime minister and the Tigray leader over the weekend. The rival sides agree "the differences opposing them are political and require political solution through dialogue," he said.</p> <p>The envoy added, however, that "the window of opportunity we have is very little and that time is paramount for any intervention" in the critical situation facing not only Ethiopia but the Horn of Africa at large. He repeated calls for dialogue without preconditions, an immediate cease-fire and immediate and unrestricted humanitarian access.</p> <p>State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters that envoy Feltman met with the prime minister Friday and then went to neighboring Kenya to meet its president before returning to Ethiopia on Monday to "urgently press the parties to de-escalate the conflict and negotiate." There was no indication that Feltman, like Obasanjo, went to the Tigray region. Price simply said that "we have engaged with the (Tigray forces) as well."</p> <p>The prime minister's spokeswoman has called the meeting with Feltman "constructive," with no details.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>11/08 Migrant caravan leader: group headed to US</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/migrant-caravan-organizer-group-headed-us-border-81047472">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/migrant-caravan-organizer-group-headed-us-border-81047472</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>TAPACHULA, Mexico -- The leader of an effort by Central American migrants to walk across southern Mexico said Monday the group will now head to the U.S. border, rather than Mexico City as originally planned.</p> <p>Leader and immigration activist Irineo Mujica said in a video that he will try to organize another caravan of thousands of migrants to reach the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, where both groups will join up and set out for the border.</p> <p>The apparent change in plans comes after Mujica said the group has been pursued and harassed by Mexican government officials. Relations deteriorated after a group of migrants pelted officers of Mexico's National Guard with a hail of rocks Thursday, injuring five guard officers.</p> <p>The change of plans may be an act of desperation: the group is dwindling after more than two weeks of walking through punishing heat, and now may number as little as 1,300 people. It had once been as large as 4,000.</p> <p>The group of mainly Central American migrants got a cold welcome Monday when they entered the state of Oaxaca; the town of Chahuities initially refused to let them enter for fear of spreading COVID-19.</p> <p>Adrián Aguirre, a migrant from Nicaragua, said when he arrived in Chahuities, "There were municipal police cars blocking the way, and then later we entered." But many of the town's stores closed when they saw the migrants coming, meaning they couldn't buy food or drink. They settled in a park to spend the night.</p> <p>The Mexican government has been attempting to discourage the march, saying the poor conditions are putting the migrants' lives at risk. The National Immigration Institute said six cases of the tropical fever dengue had been detected among members of the migrant march, but had not previously mentioned cases of coronavirus.</p>

The National Guard officers were tailing the march Thursday and had apparently tried to detain some of the mainly Central American migrants, when a group of 100 to 150 males started throwing rocks at two truckloads of guard officers equipped with plastic shields and helmets.

The Guard said in a statement that four male officers and one female officer suffered “considerable” injuries, and were hospitalized. It said that “at no time did the officers respond to the attack.”

National Guard officers have been wary of confronting migrants since a shooting incident the previous Sunday left one migrant dead.

Confrontations between law enforcement and migrants had been relatively rare in Mexico, but National Guard officers opened fire on a pickup truck carrying migrants Sunday when the vehicle tried to avoid an immigration checkpoint; the Guard said it had tried to ram a patrol vehicle.

A Cuban migrant was killed and four other migrants were wounded.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador later said the shooting was unjustified, and that the pickup — apparently driven by a suspected migrant trafficker — had simply tried to run past the checkpoint, not ram the Guard vehicle. The guard officers involved are now subject to a federal criminal investigation.

An estimated 4,000 migrants set out from the city of Tapachula, near the Guatemalan border, on foot on Oct. 23. They have made slow progress trudging along highways amid the brutal heat of the region, advancing only about 95 miles (150 kilometers) in almost two weeks.

Much larger caravans crossed Mexico in 2018 and 2019, but those migrants never tried to walk the whole distance. They usually caught rides aboard passing trucks.

But Mexico has told truckers not to pick up migrants, saying they could face charges of migrant trafficking.

A National Guard officer was killed by suspected immigrant traffickers in September. And a dozen members of an elite police force in the northern border state of Tamaulipas are on trial for allegedly killing 14 Guatemalan migrants and five other people, whose bodies were found shot and burned near the U.S. border in late January.

Frustration has been growing for months among the thousands of migrants waiting in Tapachula near the Guatemala border. Mexico’s strategy had been to contain migrants in the south, far from the U.S. border, while allowing them to apply for asylum in Mexico.

But Mexico’s asylum system has been overwhelmed and the slow process led many to decide it was not worth waiting.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Iran bans newspaper over poverty graphic
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-bans-newspaper-linked-supreme-leader-poverty-81030399">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-bans-newspaper-linked-supreme-leader-poverty-81030399</a>
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- Iran’s judicial authorities reportedly banned a newspaper Monday for publishing a front-page graphic that appeared to show Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s hand drawing the poverty line in the Islamic Republic, amid widespread anger over the cratering economy.</p> <p>The semiofficial Mehr news agency said Iran’s media supervisory body shut down the daily newspaper Kelid after it published a front-page article titled “Millions of Iranians Living under Poverty Line” on Saturday.</p>

Under the headline, the graphic shows a person's left hand holding a pen and drawing a red line across the page as silhouettes of people underneath are reaching up to the line.

The graphic resembled an earlier image of Khamenei writing on a piece of paper with his left hand, a prominent ring on one of his fingers. His right has been paralyzed since a 1981 bombing.

The Young Journalists Club, a group associated with state television, earlier reported that censors were examining the newspaper after the publication. The state-run IRNA news agency acknowledged Kelid had been shut down, without explaining the reason.

Kelid could not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday. Their website has been taken offline.

Iran, whose state-dominated economy has long faced trouble since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, has been under increased pressure since then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

The Iranian rial is now about 281,500 to the dollar — compared with 32,000 rials for \$1 at the time when the 2015 nuclear deal was struck. With U.S. sanctions still strangling the economy, record-breaking inflation has hit ordinary Iranians where it hurts most. Stunned shoppers are cutting meat and dairy from their diets, buying less and less each month.

While radio and television stations are all state-controlled in Iran, newspapers and magazines can be owned and published by private individuals. However, Iranian journalists face constant harassment and the threat of arrest, according to press advocacy groups.

The Committee to Protect Journalists called on Iran to immediately reverse its decision banning the newspaper.

“Truthful and open reporting about matters of daily life is of vital importance for the Iranian public,” said Sherif Mansour, the committee's Middle East and North Africa program coordinator. “Iranian authorities must allow Kelid to resume operations immediately and cease any attempts to censor the media.”

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Crisis: standoff Belarus, Poland border</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/standoff-belarus-escorts-1000-migrants-border-poland/story?id=81044519">https://abcnews.go.com/International/standoff-belarus-escorts-1000-migrants-border-poland/story?id=81044519</a>
GIST	<p>An extraordinary standoff is taking place on <a href="#">the border between Poland and Belarus</a>, after Belarusian authorities escorted hundreds of migrants up to it, in a dramatic escalation of what European countries have called a campaign by <a href="#">Belarus' authoritarian leader, Alexander Lukashenko</a>, to use migrants as "weapons."</p> <p>Videos published by Belarusian media and Poland's defense ministry on Monday showed a long column of people, mostly from the Middle East, being marched by Belarusian guards in camouflage along a highway that leads up the Polish border region of Podlaskie.</p> <p>The line, estimated to be made up of more than 1,000 people, was blocked by Polish border guards standing behind barbed wire fences. Videos posted later showed chaotic clashes, with some migrants trying to break down fences, while dozens of Polish police barred their path and Belarusian guards stood behind blocking their retreat. There were reports Polish border police used tear gas to push back the crowd, and in some videos, the sounds of gunshots could be heard.</p> <p>As night fell, video from a helicopter released by Poland's interior ministry showed dozens of tents set up near the border close to the village of Kuznica.</p>

Poland's government on Monday vowed not to let the migrants cross and accused Lukashenko of seeking a confrontation and calling it a "hybrid attack."

"There are large groups of migrants in the area of our border, which are fully controlled by the Belarusian security services and army," Poland's government said in a statement Monday. "By creating an artificial migration route and cynically exploiting migrants, Lukashenko is trying to destabilize Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, and to force the European Union to lift the sanctions imposed on the Minsk regime."

The standoff escalates a crisis that has been worsening for months. Lukashenko is accused of luring in thousands of migrants since late spring and pushing them over the border into Poland and Lithuania as retaliation for the European Union's support for Belarus' pro-democracy movement that came close to toppling him with mass protests last year.

Poland and Lithuania have taken tough steps to block people from crossing, but Belarus refuses to allow them to return; the result has been that hundreds of people, including families with young children, have become trapped in the forests along the border, stranded without food or shelter for weeks. Temperatures are close to freezing and at least eight people have already died since September.

When ABC News reporters visited the border last month, they encountered three Yemeni asylum seekers who had been trapped in the forest for two weeks, pushed back and forth between [Polish and Belarusian border guards](#).

One of the men, Rami Olaqi, told ABC News that Belarusian guards had robbed and beaten them before shoving them back toward Poland.

"They don't care," he said. "It will be better for them if we die, you know?"

It's just a way "for the Belarusian state to intimidate Europe. And using the refugees as a bullet in their war," Olaqi said.

Polish border guards have been pushing people back across the border, even when they have sought asylum, people who have tried to cross and local activists have said. Most experts consider such pushbacks illegal under international law.

Poland's government spokesman, Piotr Muller, on Monday said Poland estimates there are around 3,000-4,000 migrants currently near the border, and that there are up to 10,000 in Belarus right now hoping to cross into Poland.

Lithuania's Interior ministry on Monday said it had asked the government to consider declaring a state of emergency at the border in view of the situation with Poland.

The flows of migrants began when Belarus eased visa restrictions for dozens of countries, including many in the Middle East. Once in the country, migrants told ABC News Belarusian border guards often lead them to crossing points and cut holes in border fences to let them through.

Lukashenko himself in public speeches has repeatedly threatened to let more migrants through. Belarus' authorities Monday accused Poland of being to blame for the crisis and claimed Belarus was prioritizing the migrants' safety.

"The Belarusian side is taking the necessary measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the channels of international communication, as well as the safety of people moving along the highway," Belarus' State Border Committee wrote in a statement on its Facebook page.

There were calls on Monday for the European Union to respond. Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, on Monday said the European Union should approve further sanctions against Lukashenko's government.



	<p>The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also issued a statement saying it is concerned by the escalation at the border and it "stands ready to further assist our allies and maintain safety and security in the region."</p> <p>"The Lukashenka regime's use of migrants as a hybrid tactic is unacceptable," the alliance of which Poland and Lithuania are members said.</p>
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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	11/09 Facebook whistleblower fears the metaverse
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/technology-lifestyle-business-only-on-ap-media-e4f03d38243552e46a77d0d3f0d45e3b">https://apnews.com/article/technology-lifestyle-business-only-on-ap-media-e4f03d38243552e46a77d0d3f0d45e3b</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS (AP) — Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen said the world should fear the impact of <a href="#">the metaverse</a> that the social media giant has rebranded to focus on, saying the futuristic virtual reality world would force people to give up more of their personal information, be addicting and give the embattled company another monopoly in the online world.</p> <p>In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday as she makes a series of appearances before European lawmakers drawing up <a href="#">rules for social media companies</a>, Haugen said her former employer has rushed to prioritize the metaverse because “if you don’t like the conversation, you try to change the conversation.”</p> <p>“Facebook should have a transparency plan for the metaverse before they start building all this stuff, because they’ve demonstrated with regard to Facebook that they can hide behind a wall, they keep making unforced errors, they keep making things that prioritize their own profits over our safety,” she said.</p> <p>The <a href="#">metaverse is sort of the internet brought to life</a>, or at least rendered in 3D. CEO Mark Zuckerberg has described it as a “virtual environment” you can go inside of — instead of just looking at on a screen — and refocused Facebook’s business model on it, including renaming the company Meta. People can meet, work and play, using virtual reality headsets, augmented reality glasses, smartphone apps or other devices.</p> <p>Haugen is a former product manager at Facebook turned whistleblower whose revelations about the company’s practices have drawn global attention. Documents she has turned over to authorities and her <a href="#">testimony to lawmakers</a> on both sides of the Atlantic have revealed deep-seated problems at the company and energized legislative and regulatory efforts around the world to crack down on big tech companies.</p> <p>She says the social media giant prioritizes engagement and user growth over online safety. Haugen, who also provided a <a href="#">vast trove of redacted internal documents</a> to a group of news organizations, alleges that Facebook’s systems amplify online hate and extremism, fail to protect young people from harmful content and the company lacks any incentive to fix the problems.</p> <p>Haugen’s documents have exposed an internal crisis at the company that provides free services to 3 billion people.</p> <p>Zuckerberg has dismissed Haugen’s claims as a “coordinated effort” to paint a false picture of the company. A spokesman for Facebook said the company was working on a response to her comments about the metaverse.</p> <p>Officials in Washington and European capitals are taking her claims seriously. European Union lawmakers questioned her intensely Monday, before applauding her at the end of the 2 1/2 hour hearing.</p>

The EU is drafting new digital rules for the 27-nation bloc that call for reining in big “digital gatekeepers,” requiring them to be more transparent about their algorithms that determine what people see on their feeds and making them more accountable for content on their platforms.

Facebook has said it largely supports regulations, with legislative efforts in the EU and United Kingdom much further along than those in the U.S.

Haugen is calling for politicians to ensure extra scrutiny as Facebook focuses on the metaverse — a world that others including Microsoft and video gaming companies also are moving to build. She said such immersive environments are “extremely addictive, and they encourage people to unplug from the reality we actually live in.” In “Snow Crash,” the 1992 sci-fi novel that coined the phrase, “it was a thing that people used to numb themselves when their lives were horrible,” she added.

Haugen voiced concern about how the metaverse will require adding sensors in homes and workplaces.

“In case of workplaces, we don’t get to choose to be in those spaces. Like, if your employer decides they’re now a metaverse company, you have to give out way more personal data to a company that’s demonstrated that it lies whenever it’s in its best interests,” she said.

Haugen has made stops in London and Berlin to speak to officials and lawmakers and spoke at a tech conference in Lisbon. She also will address French lawmakers in Paris on Wednesday.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Report: DDoS attacks shatter records</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://threatpost.com/ddos-attacks-records-q3/176082/">https://threatpost.com/ddos-attacks-records-q3/176082/</a>
GIST	<p>The third quarter saw the sheer volume of distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks surge to several thousand hits per day, signaling a re-distribution of tactics by malicious actors away from cryptomining and toward the use of DDoS as a tool of intimidation, disinformation and straight-up extortion.</p> <p>The latest <a href="#">DDoS report for Q3 from Kaspersky</a> details a record-breaking frenzy of recent activity by threat actors.</p> <p>“July started off relatively quietly, but towards the middle of the month the average daily count of DDoS attacks exceeded 1,000, with a whopping 8,825 attacks on August 18,” the report said. “For two more days, August 21 and 22, the daily count of five thousand was exceeded and over three thousand attacks were detected on August 2 and 6, September 16, 18, 19 and 22.”</p> <p>And while the volume of <a href="#">DDoS attacks</a> spiked, their duration declined, the researchers found. “This may be due to the decreasing number of attacks lasting 50 hours or more and a rise in relatively short attacks,” the report added.</p> <p><b>Middleboxes and Unavailable Ports</b></p> <p>The third quarter also ushered in two <a href="#">new DDoS attack vectors</a>, the analysts found.</p> <p>During Q3, a team from the University of Maryland and the University of Colorado at Boulder figured out how to exploit TCP protocol to attack security devices like firewalls, deep packet inspection (DPI) tools and network address translators (NAT); often called “middleboxes” because of their position between the client and server.</p> <p>“If a request for access to a banned resource is sent under the guise of the victim, the response from a middlebox can be significantly larger,” the Kaspersky report said. “As such, the researchers found more than 386,000 devices giving an amplification factor of over 100, with more than 97,000 of them over 500, and 192 of them over 51,000.”</p>

Another new attack first identified by Nexusguard named Black Storm bombards communications service provider (CSP) networks with requests to access to closed ports.

“Processing these messages consumes a lot of resources, which overloads victim devices and prevents them from accepting legitimate requests,” the Kaspersky report said. “The researchers note that this method allows an attacker to take down not only individual servers, but the provider’s entire network, including a large one.”

### **Mēris Botnet**

First found by Yandex and Qrator Labs, Mēris is able to send an enormous number of requests per second, and claimed victims including cybersecurity media sites Krebs on Security and Infosecurity, plus New Zealand banks, post mail service and the country’s MetService weather service.

Other notable DDoS events during the quarter included attacks on VoIP providers in Britain, Canada, and the U.S; a ransomware attack on Bitcoin.org; the targeting of Russian newspaper Vedomosti; the shutdown of gaming servers in Europe for Final Fantasy XIV; and many more.

More than 40 percent of DDoS attacks during the third quarter targeted operations in the U.S., followed by Hong Kong (15 percent) and China (7.74 percent), the report found.

Stefano De Blasi told Threatpost that researchers from Digital Shadows have seen an uptick in threat actors combining DDoS attacks with extortion demands over the past two years, which could be a sign of more to come, De Blasi said.

“Different motivations can lie behind a DDoS attack,” De Blasi told Threatpost. “Cybercriminals typically conduct DDoS operations to temporarily disrupt a target’s infrastructure or act as a decoy for more dangerous activity, but companies affected by high-intensity DDoS attacks may experience a long-time interruption of business, which in turn may cause financial loss, brand or reputational damage, and influence customer trust.”

### **DDoS vs. Cryptomining Computing Power Allocation**

The Kaspersky team explained in the report that the ecosystem of botnet computing power is pulled between [cryptocurrency mining](#) and powering DDoS botnets. Counterintuitively, this quarter saw growth in DDoS attacks even while cryptocurrency prices are still high.

“Now, judging by the growing DDoS market against the backdrop of consistently high cryptocurrency prices, attackers have started to allocate their resources differently,” the report said. “And this is quite logical: DDoS services are in demand, and the prolonged supply shortage has likely led to an increase in prices in this market, making it profitable for botnet operators to resume attacks. As such, the DDoS market seems to be returning to the growth rate we saw in late 2019.”

With predictions indicating more DDoS attacks on the way, it’s up to organizations to mount a defense and protecting internet of things (IoT) devices connected to public networks from being hijacked and turned into botnets, Ben Pick, a consultant and nVisum told Threatpost.

“Organizations can protect themselves by applying intermediate tooling at network boundaries, Pick said. “Most cloud services include security tools to mitigate or outright prevent DDoS attacks. Utilizing a specific tool is a better protection apparatus than spinning up resources to accommodate the additional network bandwidth, as that can cause massive impacts to the overall infrastructure costs.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Campaign: Zoho bug critical industries
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/cyberespionage/campaign-used-known-zoho-bug-to-compromise-firms-across-critical-industries">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/cyberespionage/campaign-used-known-zoho-bug-to-compromise-firms-across-critical-industries</a>

**GIST**

Researchers at Palo Alto Networks [say](#) they have identified another campaign that has been leveraging a remote code execution vulnerability in a popular Zoho password manager and single sign-on service.

The campaign dates back to at least Sept. 17, when the group was observed scanning hundreds of organizations that had yet to install a Sept. 6 update to fix the flaw, including 350 Zoho servers in the U.S. alone. Five days later, they began setting up web shells and exploiting targets across multiple different sectors through October.

“During that window, the actor successfully compromised at least nine global entities across the technology, defense, healthcare, energy and education industries,” wrote researchers Robert Falcone, Jeff White and Peter Renals.

Palo Alto Networks has not formally attributed the campaign to a state or hacking group, but do note substantial overlap in tooling and tactics between this actor and other Chinese hacking groups, most notably APT27, a cyberespionage group linked to China.

Those overlaps include the use of ChinaChopper malware to gain initial access, the use of two tools – Godzilla to set up web shells and a backdoor called NGLite. Both were developed with Chinese instructions, but as the researchers note, they’re also freely available for download of the web. The specific order and methods used during exfiltration also mirrors past APT27 operations.

In September, CISA, the FBI and the U.S. Coast Guard [warned](#) that one or multiple state-aligned hacking groups were “likely” exploiting a remote code execution vulnerability in multiple versions of ManageEngine ADSelfService Plus.

The agencies also warned that they had observed it being used against a wide variety of sectors and industries, including “critical infrastructure companies, U.S.-cleared defense contractors, academic institutions, and other entities.” They used the flaw to steal credentials, conduct lateral movement and exfiltrate valuable data from services like Active Directory.

“APT cyber actors have targeted academic institutions, defense contractors, and critical infrastructure entities in multiple industry sectors—including transportation, IT, manufacturing, communications, logistics, and finance. Illicitly obtained access and information may disrupt company operations and subvert U.S. research in multiple sectors,” the agencies noted.

The activity revealed by Palo Alto Networks on Sunday is from a “second, unrelated campaign” targeting the same Zoho vulnerability, the firm said. They too targeted Active Directory shortly after gaining initial access to install credential-stealing malware. In line with previous APT operations, the ultimate objective appeared to be espionage and data theft from a wide range of industries.

“Unit 42 believes that the actor’s primary goal involved gaining persistent access to the network and the gathering and exfiltration of sensitive documents from the compromised organization,” the researchers concluded.

U.S. officials have spent years ringing the alarm about widespread hacking of U.S. defense contractors by state-sponsored groups, most notably China. The sheer volume of intellectual property theft happening in the defense industrial base – particularly from Chinese-linked groups – has led to a substantial closing of the technological gap between the two nations, [according](#) to a 2019 report from the Department of Defense. More recently, Chinese hackers have been [increasingly targeting](#) companies that engage in biomedical or biotechnology research as well as a host of other emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing, according to the U.S. intelligence community.

[Return to Top](#)**HEADLINE****11/08 Medical device incident response playbook**

SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/cloud/motivated-by-wannacry-attack-group-unveils-medical-device-incident-response-playbook">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/cloud/motivated-by-wannacry-attack-group-unveils-medical-device-incident-response-playbook</a>
GIST	<p>The <a href="#">Cloud Security Alliance</a> (CSA) IoT Working Group today released a new medical device incident response playbook designed to support healthcare delivery organizations mitigate a range of risks posed by malware and other cybersecurity threats.</p> <p>The working group is tasked with assessing use cases for IoT deployments and providing guidance to secure the enterprise IoT infrastructure, including best practice implementations and identifying security gaps.</p> <p>The new guidance is targeted toward those healthcare leaders tasked with medical device security, including IT directors, administrators, biomedical engineering, and other relevant cybersecurity leaders. The guide may also prove useful for manufacturers and service providers.</p> <p>The playbook was motivated by the global 2017 WannaCry attack, which “demonstrated the susceptibility of medical devices to malware” when hospital radiology equipment drives were encrypted during the attack. The cyberattack demonstrated “one of the most significant issues when dealing with medical device cybersecurity; availability.”</p> <p>While these incidents can lead to data breaches, the primary concern should always be the availability of medical devices in the clinical care setting amid security incidents to avoid care delays and other patient safety risks.</p> <p>Several healthcare security leaders previously noted that the complexity of the device ecosystem and the reliance on legacy software make medical device security one of the biggest challenges providers face.</p> <p>“The device is part of an ecosystem that, when it’s weak, breaks the entire ecosystem,” Erik Decker, Intermountain Healthcare assistant vice president and chief information security officer, <a href="#">previously explained</a>.</p> <p>“Suddenly we’re not able to care for our patients. Because that one device that’s over here in a corner was deemed as a controlled risk, but was used as a beachhead and blew through everything,” he added. “We’re not having the risk conversation at the ecosystem level.”</p> <p>The new playbook is designed to tackle these difficulties and sheds light on a host of device security and visibility challenges, based on a NIST perspective and centered around clinical considerations like the overwhelming patient safety risks.</p> <p>The guide centers around use cases with clinical context for responding to incidents on various devices, including imaging platforms, implanted devices, and networked infusion pumps.</p> <p>Security leaders will find needed preparation steps, keeping in mind that “specific minimum capabilities are needed in order to be able to effectively conduct incident response. ... This preparation phase includes a focus on clinical impacts associated with device compromise or lack of availability.”</p> <p>The guide includes needed visibility measures and inventory requirements, which is the most important information source for incident response measures. The inventory insights include searching for similar devices together, data fields to inform searches, and classification considerations.</p> <p>CSA also included taxonomy for classifying devices according to the potential risk to patients, descriptions, and example device types, as well as insights on data classification, building a data repository, and recommended tools.</p> <p>All in all, the guidance should “be viewed as a starting point for medical device incident response and not a prescriptive end goal.”</p>

	<p>“Having access to data flow diagrams also provides the IR team with a powerful tool for tracing potential lateral movement in the case that a medical device or associated system has been compromised,” according to the guidance. “Increased connectivity opens new attack vectors that can be exploited through weaknesses in medical devices themselves.”</p> <p>“Delivery organizations need an incident response strategy tailored to medical devices, should a medical device become compromised and impact their mission,” it added. “This playbook should be reviewed and adapted by clinical leadership to ensure it is acceptable from a patient care standpoint.”</p> <p>The robust playbook is one of the first healthcare cybersecurity guides solely focused on incident response for medical devices. The Healthcare and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council previously released two medical device guides, centering on lifecycle security and joint health IT security plans.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Arrests: 7 in REvil, GandCrab ransomware</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/europol-announces-arrests-7-people-linked-revil-gandcrab-ransomware">https://www.securityweek.com/europol-announces-arrests-7-people-linked-revil-gandcrab-ransomware</a>
GIST	<p>Europol on Monday announced that law enforcement agencies in several countries have arrested a total of seven people allegedly linked to REvil and GandCrab ransomware operations.</p> <p>The arrests have been carried out since February — three suspects were arrested in South Korea, one in Kuwait, two in Romania, and one in an unnamed European country. Five of the suspects are believed to have been involved in cyberattacks that leveraged REvil (aka Sodinokibi) ransomware, while the other two have been linked to GandCrab attacks.</p> <p>The latest arrests were carried out on November 4 and they targeted the three individuals located in Romania and Kuwait.</p> <p>The individual arrested in the unnamed European country may be Yaroslav Vasinskiy, a Ukrainian national arrested in Poland last month.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">CNN</a>, the U.S. has requested the extradition of Vasinskiy to face charges related to the use of REvil ransomware, including in the attack targeting IT company Kaseya. The Justice Department is expected to <a href="#">announce charges</a> on Monday against Vasinskiy and a Russian national, Yevgeniy Polyanin, who remains at large.</p> <p>The Justice Department is also expected to announce the seizure of \$6 million in ransomware payments received by Polyanin.</p> <p>It’s worth noting that REvil, which emerged in 2019, has been described as a successor of GandCrab. These ransomware families have been used in attacks aimed at several major companies, with their operators demanding millions and even tens of millions of dollars in ransom payments.</p> <p>A series of recent attacks, including the ones on Kaseya and Colonial Pipeline, led to authorities intensifying their efforts against ransomware, resulting in <a href="#">arrests</a>, cybercriminals announcing <a href="#">shutdowns</a>, and operations getting <a href="#">disrupted</a> by law enforcement.</p> <p>Reports of the REvil ransomware being <a href="#">shut down by a law enforcement operation</a> emerged roughly two weeks ago.</p> <p>The arrests announced on Monday by Europol are part of a law enforcement operation dubbed GoldDust, which involved 17 countries. Investigations were conducted by government agencies in collaboration with cybersecurity companies, and the efforts resulted in the release of decryption tools that, according to authorities, <a href="#">helped organizations avoid</a> hundreds of millions of dollars in potential losses.</p>



	<p>The <a href="#">DarkSide</a> ransomware, which has been used in the <a href="#">attack on Colonial Pipeline</a>, has also been linked to REvil. The U.S. government announced last week that it's <a href="#">offering up to \$10 million</a> for information leading to the identification or location of senior members of the DarkSide gang.</p> <p>Interpol announced last week that six individuals allegedly associated with the Clop ransomware were <a href="#">arrested</a> in a global law enforcement operation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Passport scammers spoof Texas ICE HSI</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/passport-scammers-spoof-texas-hsi/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/passport-scammers-spoof-texas-hsi/</a>
GIST	<p>Officials at the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) department in Texas have issued a <a href="#">warning</a> about a new phone scam.</p> <p>Threat actors carrying out the malicious campaign have been impersonating special agents at the San Antonio HSI to call up members of the public.</p> <p>Victims are told that a problem has been detected with their passport. They are then threatened with arrest by the imposter agent unless they make a payment to the HSI.</p> <p>"The scammers claim the passport is involved in some type of crime and threaten the caller by indicating police will be dispatched to their home to arrest them," said officials at the San Antonio ICE in a scam warning issued November 4.</p> <p>The fraudsters have found a way to make it appear to the victim that the call they are receiving is coming from the HSI San Antonio main phone number, 210-979-4500.</p> <p>"HSI special agents and local police do not call people on the phone to warn them they are about to be arrested," said HSI officials.</p> <p>"Agents neither request financial information, such as bank account and credit card account information, nor demand money from someone to dismiss an investigation or remove an arrest warrant."</p> <p>Members of the public who receive a threatening call or message from the spoofed HSI main line number are advised not to give out any personal or financial information and to end the conversation immediately if threats and intimidation persist.</p> <p>HSI added that individuals who are targeted by the scammers can help law enforcement to catch the criminals by trying to collect contact information from the caller and reporting it to the anonymous ICE tip line, 1 (866) 347-2423 or completing the online tip <a href="#">form</a>.</p> <p>In July, ICE officials in Virginia <a href="#">warned</a> international students that its phone number was being spoofed to trick individuals studying in the United States on student visas into making fraudulent payments and giving out sensitive personal information.</p> <p>The scammers behind that campaign asked international students for payments in Bitcoin, a currency not accepted by the federal government.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Crime group busted; victims money-mules</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/criminal-group-dismantled-after-forcing-victims-to-be-money-mules/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/criminal-group-dismantled-after-forcing-victims-to-be-money-mules/</a>
GIST	<p>The Spanish police have arrested 45 people who are believed to be members of an online fraud group that operated twenty websites to defraud at least 200 people of 1,500,000 Euros (\$1.73 million).</p>

The simultaneous weekend raids took place in various provinces of Spain, and were the result of lengthy investigations that began in July 2019.

#### **Luring with low-priced electronics**

The actors created at least twenty distinct fraudulent web portals where they offered various consumer electronic products at an alluringly low price.

When victims made purchases, the money went to bank accounts that belonged to other victims who were forced by the criminals to act as "[money mules](#)".

The actors used the order information to contact the person who made the purchase, and told them that they had been scammed.

Subsequently, they informed the victim that the only way to get their money back was to become "money mules" themselves.

These people were coerced to open new bank accounts and issue "clean" credit cards, and then send them to various PO boxes in the Republic of Benin.

The money was withdrawn at ATMs in Benin, with the actors hoping that the West African country would be far from any kind of scrutiny.

In some cases, the money mules were happy with the commission they received, and opened more bank accounts voluntarily.

In other cases where victims weren't as cooperative, the criminals had to deliver death threats or use forged contracts that presented them as legitimate moneylenders, tricking victims into thinking they operated in a legal context.

#### **Offering French loans**

The second type of fraudulent operation of the same ring came in the form of online loan advertisements posted and promoted on social media.

The actors posed as French financiers and offered loans on the condition of receiving a small deposit that was supposedly required for covering loan application commissions and relevant expenses.

These ranged between 500 and 1,000 Euros (\$580 - \$1,150), and at least 200 people sent these amounts to the crooks in the hope of receiving a loan.

Apart from that deposit, the victims were instructed to obtain a new credit card and send it to Benin, together with the matching online banking credentials.

The Spanish police [mention](#) strong links between this particular group and others in Germany, Austria, France, and Poland, and so the investigations will continue in collaboration with Interpol and Europol.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Treasury sanctions Chatex cryptoexchange
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/us-sanctions-chatex-cryptoexchange-used-by-ransomware-gangs/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/us-sanctions-chatex-cryptoexchange-used-by-ransomware-gangs/</a>
GIST	<p>The US Treasury Department announced today sanctions against the Chatex cryptocurrency exchange for helping ransomware gangs evade sanctions and facilitating ransom transactions.</p> <p>The Treasury also <a href="#">sanctioned the Russian-linked Suex crypto exchange</a> in September for helping at least eight ransomware groups, with over 40% of its known transaction linked to illicit actors.</p>

"Analysis of Chatex's known transactions indicate that over half are directly traced to illicit or high-risk activities such as darknet markets, high-risk exchanges, and ransomware," the Treasury Department [said](#).

"Chatex is being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13694, as amended, for providing material support to Suex and the threat posed by criminal ransomware actors."

Just as in Suex's case, by sanctioning Chatex the US administration aims to take down the main channel used by ransomware operations to collect ransom payments from their victims.

The Treasury also designated IZIBITS OU, Chatextech SIA, and Hightrade Finance Ltd for providing assistance to Chatex by setting up infrastructure and enabling Chatex operations.

By sanctioning crypto exchanges that provide material support to ransomware gangs, the US hopes to drain their funding and disrupt their operations.

"Unprincipled virtual currency exchanges like Chatex are critical to the profitability of ransomware activities, especially by laundering and cashing out the proceeds for criminals," the Treasury added.

"Treasury will continue to use all available authorities to disrupt malicious cyber actors, block ill-gotten criminal proceeds, and deter additional actions against the American people."

### **Crackdown on ransomware payment channels**

FinCEN's Financial Trend Analysis report was issued on the heels of governments worldwide saying they will crack down [on cryptocurrency payment channels used by ransomware gangs](#).

One year ago, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) also warned that [ransomware negotiators that they could face civil penalties](#) for facilitating ransom payments if their deals involve ransomware gangs already on its sanctions list.

The US government has also levied sanctions against other entities and threat actors associated with ransomware operations in recent years.

The list of ransomware-linked sanctions includes [the developer of Cryptolocker ransomware, two Iranians](#) for providing material support to SamSam ransomware, the [Lazarus Group and two sub-groups, Bluenoroff and Andariel](#),

The [US also charged multiple Evil Corp members](#) for stealing over \$100 million and added them to the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions list. This group is associated with multiple ransomware families, including [WastedLocker](#), [Hades](#), [Phoenix CryptoLocker](#), [PayLoadBin](#), [DoppelPaymer](#), [Grief](#), and [Macaw Locker](#).

Today, the Treasury also sanctioned REvil affiliates Yaroslav Vasinskyi and Yevgeniy Polyanin for their part in [deploying ransomware payloads in love 5,500 attacks](#).

The US Department of State also announced on Thursday [a \\$10,000,000 reward](#) for the identification or location of DarkSide ransomware core members and \$5,000,000 for information leading to the arrest of affiliates and other participants in DarkSide attacks.

The total amount of ransoms that ended in ransomware groups' wallets amounted to over \$400 million in the last 12 months, over four times more when compared to the entirety of 2019, according to the Treasury.

Last month, the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) identified roughly \$5.2 billion worth of outgoing Bitcoin transactions likely [tied to the top 10 most commonly reported ransomware variants](#).

HEADLINE	11/08 MediaMarkt hit by Hive ransomware
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/mediamarkt-hit-by-hive-ransomware-initial-240-million-ransom/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/mediamarkt-hit-by-hive-ransomware-initial-240-million-ransom/</a>
GIST	<p>Electronics retail giant MediaMarkt has suffered a Hive ransomware with an initial ransom demand of \$240 million, causing IT systems to shut down and store operations to be disrupted in Netherlands and Germany.</p> <p>MediaMarkt is Europe's largest consumer electronics retailer, with over 1,000 stores in 13 countries. MediaMarkt employs approximately 53,000 employees and has a total sales of €20.8 billion.</p> <p><b>A Hive ransomware attack</b></p> <p>MediaMarkt suffered a ransomware attack late Sunday evening into Monday morning that encrypted servers and workstations and led to the shutdown of IT systems to prevent the attack's spread.</p> <p>BleepingComputer has learned that the attack affected numerous retail stores throughout Europe, primarily those in the Netherlands.</p> <p>While online sales continue to function as expected, cash registers cannot accept credit cards or print receipts at affected stores. The systems outage is also preventing returns due to the inability to look up previous purchases.</p> <p>Local media <a href="#">reports</a> that internal MediaMarkt communications tell employees to avoid encrypted systems and disconnect cash registers from the network.</p> <p>Screenshots posted on Twitter of alleged internal communications state that 3,100 servers were affected in this attack. However, BleepingComputer has not been able to corroborate those statements at this time.</p> <p>BleepingComputer has confirmed that the Hive Ransomware operation is behind the attack and initially demanded a huge, but unrealistic, \$240 million ransom demand to receive a decryptor for encrypted files.</p> <p>Ransomware gangs commonly demand large ransoms at the beginning to allow room for negotiation and usually receive a fraction of the initial demand. However, in the attack on MediaMarkt, BleepingComputer has been told it was almost automatically reduced to a much lower amount.</p> <p><b>Hive ransom note</b></p> <p>While it is not clear if unencrypted data has been stolen as part of the attack, Hive ransomware is known to steal files and publish them on their 'HiveLeaks' data leak site if a ransom is not paid.</p> <p>When we reached out to MediaMarkt earlier today about the attack we received the following statement:  <i>The MediaMarktSaturn Retail Group and its national organizations became the target of a cyberattack. The company immediately informed the relevant authorities and is working at full speed to identify the affected systems and repair any damage caused as quickly as possible. In the stationary stores, there may currently be limited access to some services.</i>  <i>MediaMarktSaturn continues to be available to its customers via all sales channels and is working intensively to ensure that all services will be available again without restriction as soon as possible.</i>  <i>The company will provide information on further developments on the topic. - MediaMarkt.</i></p> <p><b>Who is Hive ransomware?</b></p> <p>Hive ransomware is a relatively new operation launched in June 2021 that is known to breach organizations through malware-laced phishing campaigns.</p> <p>Once they gain access to a network, the threat actors will spread laterally through a network while stealing unencrypted files to be used in extortion demands.</p>

	<p>When they gain admin access on a Windows domain controller, they deploy their ransomware throughout the network to encrypt all devices.</p> <p>The ransomware gang is known to seek out and delete any backups to prevent them from being used by the victim to recover their data.</p> <p>Hive has also created variants used to <a href="#">encrypt Linux and FreeBSD servers</a>, commonly used to host virtual machines.</p> <p>Unlike some ransomware operations that will not encrypt healthcare institutions, nursing homes, government agencies, and other essential services, Hive ransomware does not seem to care who they target.</p> <p>In August, this was shown when <a href="#">Hive ransomware attacked the non-profit Memorial Health System</a>, which forced staff to work with paper charts and disrupted scheduled surgeries.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 China: foreign spy agency hacked airlines</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/china-says-a-foreign-spy-agency-hacked-its-airlines-stole-passenger-records/?web_view=true">https://therecord.media/china-says-a-foreign-spy-agency-hacked-its-airlines-stole-passenger-records/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Chinese officials said last week that a foreign intelligence agency hacked several of its airlines in 2020 and stole passenger travel records.</p> <p>The hacking campaign was disclosed last week by officials from the Ministry of State Security, China's civilian intelligence, security, and secret police agency.</p> <p>The hacking campaign was discovered after one of China's airlines reported a security breach to MSS officials in January 2020.</p> <p>Investigators said they linked the hacks to a custom trojan that the attackers used to exfiltrate passenger details and other data from this first target. A subsequent investigation found other airlines compromised in the same way.</p> <p>"After an in-depth investigation, it was confirmed that the attacks were carefully planned and secretly carried out by an overseas spy intelligence agency," the MSS said in a <a href="#">press release</a> distributed via state news channels last Monday.</p> <p>The MSS did not formally attribute the attack to any foreign agency or country.</p> <p>In <a href="#">March 2020</a>, two Chinese security firms, <a href="#">Qihoo 360</a> and <a href="#">QiAnxin</a> published reports accusing the US Central Intelligence Agency of hacking Chinese organizations, including airlines, but the reports referenced historical activities between September 2008 and June 2019.</p> <p><b>China rarely reveals details about foreign cyber-attacks</b></p> <p>The press release in itself is a rarity, as the Chinese government almost never reveals attacks carried out by foreign state-sponsored hackers.</p> <p>This is in direct opposition to how western countries and private cyber-security vendors handle such incidents. As soon as a major security breach happens, western security vendors rush to investigate and publish public blog posts about attacks, with government officials making a formal statement and attribution weeks or months later.</p> <p>But when it comes to the Middle Kingdom, things are exactly the opposite.</p>

Following the two reports from Qihoo 360 and QiAnxin in March 2020, this reporter reached out to several Chinese security firms and independent security researchers to inquire about how the Chinese state handles foreign cyber-espionage attacks and the subsequent investigation and attribution.

Several sources, including representatives from two major Chinese cybersecurity firms, which we will not name here for obvious reasons, have said that Chinese security firms regularly detect attacks from foreign state actors, including the US.

However, all reports are sent to the Chinese government first and foremost, as part of the local regulatory process, which is the one who decides if news of a breach can be made public. When a western actor with US and NATO links is suspected, this almost never happens.

Sources said they received no feedback on why most of their reports have not been made public nor used to counter the wave hacks attributed to Chinese-linked actors made by western governments and security firms.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Ransomware bust could make an impact?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/ransomware-revil-arrest-kaseya/">https://www.wired.com/story/ransomware-revil-arrest-kaseya/</a>
GIST	<p><b>IN EARLY JULY</b>, heading into the holiday weekend, a <a href="#">ransomware attack against the IT management firm Kaseya</a> incapacitated <a href="#">hundreds of businesses</a>, their data encrypted by the notorious <a href="#">REvil ransomware group</a>. Now, US authorities have announced a development as unprecedented as the incident itself: The alleged perpetrator, a Ukrainian national, was arrested in October and is currently awaiting extradition from Poland.</p> <p>Ransomware gangs have <a href="#">operated with relative impunity</a> over the last few years, in part because so many of them are based in Russia and the Kremlin has steadfastly turned a blind eye. Monday's Department of Justice announcement, though, shows that the hybrid approach law enforcement has landed on can work.</p> <p>The arrest and pending extradition of 22-year-old Yaroslav Vasinskyi shows that officials are capable of apprehending key players when they slip up. And another major announcement, the seizure of \$6.1 million in alleged ransomware payments received by Russian national Yevgeniy Polyanin, shows that authorities can disrupt their targets even when they can't take them into custody.</p> <p>"Vasinskyi's arrest demonstrates how quickly we will act alongside our international partners to identify, locate, and apprehend alleged cybercriminals no matter where they are located," Attorney General Merrick Garland said at a press conference on Monday. "Ransomware attacks are fueled by criminal profits; that is why we are not just pursuing individuals responsible for those attacks. We are also committed to capturing their illicit profits and returning them whenever we can to the victims from whom they were extorted."</p> <p>The indictments against Vasinskyi and Polyanin don't go into great detail. Vasinskyi allegedly became involved with REvil most recently in December 2019, when he responded to an advertisement on a Russian hacker forum seeking ransomware affiliates. The people who write ransomware code often make <a href="#">what are essentially franchise deals</a> for their hacking tools in exchange for a cut of the proceeds—the McDonald's model for cybercrime. Vasinskyi is accused of carrying out the attack on Kaseya, which in turn spread to a number of the company's customers through software updates. Ultimately, the attack impacted as many as 1,500 businesses.</p> <p>Polyanin, who is 28 years old, is also accused of deploying REvil ransomware against multiple victims. The indictment alleges that he was responsible, at least in part, for a ransomware spree that targeted a large number of <a href="#">local Texas government agencies</a> in August 2019. Polyanin, who lives in Russia, is still at large but is thought to have links to 3,000 ransomware attacks that have collectively attempted to extort at least \$13 million from victims.</p> <p>"This is great news all the way around," says Allan Liska, an analyst for the security firm Recorded Future. "It reminds ransomware actors that they aren't safe, even in Russia. 'If we can't arrest you, we'll</p>



take your money.' Even ransomware actors have to use services outside of Russia sometimes, and that's where law enforcement has power."

Combined with [recently announced sanctions](#) from the Treasury Department and a [reward from the State Department](#) for information about the notorious DarkSide ransomware actors, the Justice Department's action on Monday reflects the Biden administration's "whole of government" ransomware mantra.

Europol also [announced](#) on Monday that Romanian law enforcement recently arrested two suspected REvil affiliates who allegedly perpetrated 5,000 ransomware attacks and extorted close to \$600,000 from victims. Justice Department officials referenced this and other recent global law enforcement operations in their remarks on Monday.

"One thing that stood out to me was calling out smaller countries like Romania and Estonia for their cooperation," Recorded Future's Liska says. "I think this is a good strategy to further isolate Russia."

Officials also praised Kaseya on Monday for cooperating with law enforcement in the wake of the company's attack. This may indicate an effort to strike a difficult but potentially vital balance. The US government has long discouraged victims from paying ransoms, but the hardline approach is one factor that has made victims wary of coming forward and potentially limiting their options. While not encouraging payment, officials have seemingly refocused on encouraging victims to come forward and collaborate so law enforcement can take quick action against perpetrators.

"I'm cautiously optimistic because of the broad nature of this announcement," says Katie Nickels, director of intelligence at the security firm Red Canary. "REvil was honestly already on the downswing after the Kaseya incident, but there are still other groups that are really bad right now. Adversaries are going to be looking to see if this is a limited action or can law enforcement continue imposing costs?"

REvil and its affiliates were on a tear earlier this year, targeting the global meat purveyor JBS and others before the Kaseya attack. That high-profile incident, coupled with intense scrutiny of the Russian ransomware gang DarkSide, largely forced REvil underground over the summer. The group seemingly began to reemerge this fall but was [recently knocked offline](#) by an international law enforcement operation that compromised and took down the gang's digital infrastructure.

If officials can keep it up, Nickels and other researchers say ransomware dynamics really could shift for the better. On Monday, the Justice Department seemed keen to establish such a track record as well.

"Today, and now for the second time in five months, we announce the seizure of digital proceeds of ransomware deployed by a transnational criminal group," Attorney General Garland said. "This will not be the last time."

For now, though, the steady drumbeat of ransomware attacks continues, thanks to an array of prolific attackers who haven't yet been caught in law enforcement's crosshairs. It's not a foregone conclusion that officials will be able to continue applying pressure and racking up wins. But for the first time, agencies within the US government and beyond seem clear about a strategy, and focused on executing it.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Space as next frontier for cyber threats?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/11/08/space-could-be-next-frontier-cyber-threats/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/11/08/space-could-be-next-frontier-cyber-threats/</a>
GIST	<p>Cyber analysts are pushing the Department of Homeland Security to ramp up cyber protections for satellites and other space-based systems, which they say are far too vulnerable to hacks that could upend large parts of the economy.</p> <p>For example: A hack that disrupted satellite-assisted navigation could jam up things from shipping and trucking to farms that rely on precision navigation tools, wreaking havoc on the economy.</p>

“Almost every critical function ... is dependent on space,” said **Sam Visner**, a technical fellow at the MITRE Corp., speaking on a [panel](#) focused on cyberthreats to space that I moderated at the [Aspen Security Forum](#). “Other countries see this as an advantage for themselves. ... They see our vulnerabilities in space and space systems as a way of gaining an advantage over us amid great power competition.”

### **The threat**

**The danger has escalated as the number of space systems has proliferated** and as more of it is being run by private companies such as Elon Musk’s SpaceX and Jeff Bezos’s Blue Origin. (Bezos owns The Washington Post).

The IT that run most space systems is complex and requires specialized knowledge that few hackers have. But those back-end systems are increasingly linked (sometimes intentionally) with commercial front-end systems that hackers are expert at cracking into.

- Such hacks could be launched by criminal gangs that demand a ransom to unlock them or by adversary nations looking to damage the U.S. economy.
- A worst case scenario: Hackers might disrupt the command and control of satellites themselves, forcing them to crash into each other with ripple effects across industry sectors.

### **The big ask**

Visner and others want DHS to declare space the 17th official [critical infrastructure](#) sector, joining others such as energy, transportation and water. That would essentially make it easier for government and industry to work together on developing cyber standards and sharing information about threats.

### **There’s some steam behind the idea.**

Reps. **Ted Lieu** (D-Calif.) and **Ken Calvert** (R-Calif.) introduced a [bill](#) in June that would mandate such a designation. The lawmakers are co-chairs of the California Aerospace Caucus. There’s no indication the bill will become law anytime soon, but it sets down a marker that Congress is interested in the issue.

**The government is also taking cyberthreats to space more seriously.** About nine months after establishing the Space Force, President Donald Trump signed an [order](#) directing the government to work with the space industry to develop cybersecurity best practices.

The Intelligence and National Security Alliance, a trade group filled with former national security officials, put out a white paper this month urging the designation.

From the white paper: “Designation would ... make clear to U.S. adversaries that the United States is committed to defending its space infrastructure, contribute to the establishment of global norms regarding the safety and security of space systems, and accelerate development of best practices and technologies for ensuring space security and resilience.”

### **There are some big roadblocks, too.**

National Cyber Director **Chris Inglis** isn’t keen on the idea, **ReadMe**’s Shaun Waterman [reports](#).

### **The problems:**

- A lot of space systems are already part of other critical infrastructure sectors, such information technology and the defense industrial base.
- Using critical infrastructure sectors to assess risks started soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and has proved unwieldy as cyberthreats have proliferated. The Biden administration has been working toward a more nuanced system that identifies particular functions and systems as critical rather than whole industry sectors. One version of that effort focuses on 55 “[critical functions](#).”
- Government is also struggling to improve protections for existing critical infrastructure sectors, many of which have been bombarded with ransomware attacks.

	<p>“Risk does not neatly align to sector boundaries,” Inglis told ReadMe. “So we’re going to walk, not so much away from the critical sectors, but towards this idea that what we’re really interested in is the threats that cut across those.”</p> <p>Supporters, however, say space deserves special treatment because it affects so many other vital industries.</p> <p>Here’s <b>John Galer</b>, assistant vice president for national security space at the Aerospace Industry Association and another panelist at the Aspen summit: “There are 55 national critical functions and space either has dependencies or uses in all those things. ... Absent the critical infrastructure designation, whether that happens or not, we’ve got a challenge here and we have to get after it.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Robinhood hack exposes millions of users</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/robinhood-hack-exposes-millions-of-customer-names-email-addresses-11636408263?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/robinhood-hack-exposes-millions-of-customer-names-email-addresses-11636408263?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<p><a href="#">Robinhood Markets</a> Inc. said Monday that an intruder gained access to its systems last week and made off with the personal information of millions of its users.</p> <p>The trading app said in <a href="#">a blog post</a> that the incident took place on Wednesday evening and that the breach has since been contained.</p> <p>Email addresses for about five million Robinhood users were exposed, as were the full names of a different group of about two million users. The intruder also accessed more-extensive personal information for a subset of more than 300 users.</p> <p>No Social Security numbers, bank-account numbers or debit-card numbers were exposed, and customers haven’t experienced any financial losses, Robinhood said in the blog post.</p> <p>The intruder was able to gain access to Robinhood systems by impersonating an authorized party to a customer-support employee on the phone, the company said.</p> <p>Robinhood said a ransom payment was demanded after the hack was contained. The company said it has informed law enforcement and continues to investigate the incident with the help of cybersecurity company <a href="#">Mandiant</a>.</p> <p>A Mandiant executive said in an emailed statement that the company recently observed the intruder in other security incidents and expects it to continue to “target and extort other organizations over the next several months.”</p> <p>So-called voice phishing, or vishing, campaigns were the subject of a Federal Bureau of Investigation notification to businesses in January that warned that cybercriminals were targeting employees of companies world-wide. In 2020, there were about 241,000 victims of phishing, vishing and related scams, more than double the figure in 2019, according to FBI data. Victim losses from such scams totaled \$54 million last year, down slightly from 2019.</p> <p>With 22.4 million net funded accounts and \$95 billion in assets under custody, Robinhood makes for an attractive target for malicious attacks. The company flagged in securities filings ahead of <a href="#">its July initial public offering</a> that, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an “increased risk that we may experience cybersecurity-related incidents as a result of our employees, service providers and other third parties working remotely on less secure systems and environments.”</p> <p>New York’s Department of Financial Services has also been investigating Robinhood’s cybersecurity practices and found violations of state cybersecurity requirements at its cryptocurrency arm, Robinhood said in the securities filings. Robinhood reached a settlement with the state regulator over its conduct that</p>

includes an expected monetary penalty of \$30 million and the hiring of an outside monitor, according to the filings.

The Robinhood intruder accessed a customer-service system that has struggled to keep up with the [millions of new users](#) the app has added since early 2020. The company more than tripled the number of customer-support agents on staff last year and planned to more than double their numbers again this year. In March, the company said it would spend \$11.7 million and hire nearly 400 people for a new customer-support center in North Carolina.

While the Robinhood hackers largely stole information that was not particularly sensitive—customer names and email addresses—that doesn’t mean it would be useless to hackers, said Allison Nixon, chief research officer at Unit 221B LLC, a cybersecurity investigations company.

For years now, Ms. Nixon has tracked hackers who have used social-engineering techniques—typically they impersonate someone via phone or email—to trick employees into revealing sensitive information. A social-engineering attack on a company-support representative is often an early step in a broader effort to mine both stolen and public data to target and impersonate victims in future attacks, she said. “These companies are basically being used as a phone book,” she said.

The more than 300 Robinhood customers who had more information stolen are now at much greater risk of being targeted by an attack such as SIM swapping, where hackers take over their victims’ mobile-phone numbers in an attempt to break into their online accounts, she said.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 Bitcoin price surges to record high: \$68,000</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/nov/09/bitcoin-price-record-high-cryptocurrencies-ethereum">https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/nov/09/bitcoin-price-record-high-cryptocurrencies-ethereum</a>
GIST	<p>The bitcoin price has reached a new record high, breaking through \$68,000 (£50,000), and analysts predict that the world’s best-known cryptocurrency will rise further in the coming weeks.</p> <p>This beats the previous record high set in late October, when bitcoin reached nearly \$67,700 before falling back again when investors discovered a new cryptocurrency, shiba inu. Other cryptocurrencies have also risen to record highs, such as ethereum which soared to \$4,837.</p> <p>Bitcoin has always been volatile but remains the world’s largest digital currency, with a market value of more than \$1.1tn. Only five years ago a single bitcoin was worth about \$700. Investors are buying it because they are worried about rising inflation – as an alternative to gold, a traditional inflation hedge – and as bond yields are falling.</p> <p>Wilfred Daye, the head of the trading platform Securitize Capital, said: “Inflation is a major consideration for investors today, and the younger generation of investors often favours cryptocurrency as a hedge over gold. In fact, while gold has slid throughout the year, bitcoin and ethereum have more than doubled. Retail investors have played a major role in fuelling this shift and institutional investors are increasingly following suit.”</p> <p>Another reason behind the surge in ethereum is its recent system upgrade, he said.</p> <p>In January, the US investment bank JPMorgan made a bold prediction, forecasting that bitcoin could rally as high as \$146,000 in the long run as it competes with gold as an alternative currency.</p> <p>The latest gains come a day after the US tech entrepreneur Jack Dorsey, the chief executive and co-founder of the payment service Square, <a href="#">said he was committed to making bitcoin “the native currency of the internet”</a> and his company had no plans to expand its offerings to other cryptocurrencies. He told analysts that he was working on a number of initiatives, such as hardware wallets to store bitcoin, and functions to allow consumers to mine for the cryptocurrency.</p>

	However, the <a href="#">Bank of England deputy governor, Sir Jon Cunliffe, warned</a> last month that <a href="#">digital currencies such as bitcoin</a> could trigger a financial meltdown unless governments step forward with tough regulations.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 DOJ: new charges in ransomware attacks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/justice-dept-ransomware.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/justice-dept-ransomware.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Justice Department said on Monday that it had <a href="#">brought charges</a> against a Russian national whom it accused of conducting ransomware attacks against American government entities and businesses, including one that temporarily <a href="#">shut down the meat supply giant JBS</a>.</p> <p>In the Biden administration's latest crackdown on cybercrime, the Justice Department also announced that it had seized \$6.1 million in ransom paid to the Russian man, Yevgeniy Polyanin, 28, who was accused in court documents of deploying ransomware known as REvil against businesses and government offices in Texas in 2019.</p> <p>Mr. Polyanin, who is believed to be abroad, has not been taken into custody by American authorities and the prospects of him facing trial in the United States remain unclear.</p> <p>The department also unsealed a separate indictment on Monday accusing a Ukrainian national, Yaroslav Vasinskyi, 22, with conducting multiple ransomware attacks, including the July 2021 assault on the technology company Kaseya. The attack on Kaseya, which manages internet technology infrastructure for other companies, allowed hackers to infect the systems of Kaseya's hundreds of customers, including Swedish pharmacies and grocery chains.</p> <p>Mr. Vasinskyi was arrested last month by authorities in Poland as he crossed into that country, and the Justice Department is seeking his extradition to stand trial in the U.S.</p> <p>"The United States, together with our allies, will do everything in our power to identify the perpetrators of ransomware attacks, to bring them to justice, and to recover the funds they have stolen from their victims," Attorney General Merrick B. Garland said in a statement.</p> <p>The arrests are part of a sustained, coordinated, global effort to combat ransomware. That effort has intensified in recent weeks as authorities in Ukraine, Romania, Kuwait and South Korea started arresting cybercriminals who use what is known as "ransomware as a service."</p> <p>"We are bringing the full strength of the federal government to disrupt malicious cyberactivity and actors, bolster resilience at home, address the abuse of virtual currency to launder ransom payments, and leverage international cooperation to disrupt the ransomware ecosystem and address safe harbors for ransomware criminals," President Biden said in a statement on Monday.</p> <p>In a ransomware attack, hackers break into a company's or agency's computer network, encrypt the data, and then demand a ransom to decrypt it.</p> <p>In recent years, ransomware groups have used a double-extortion scheme where they not only hold data hostage, but threaten to leak it online. Some groups have started offering the use of their ransomware code, portals, payment platforms and messaging infrastructure to others to conduct attacks, as in the Texas case using REvil, provided by a hacker group of the same name.</p> <p>Last month, the Biden administration hosted a two-day conference with 30 other countries to create a coalition dedicated to disrupting the global ransomware ecosystem.</p> <p>Cybersecurity experts say most ransomware developers are based in Russia, where they enjoy broad immunity because Russia does not arrest or extradite them. (Russia was notably not invited to the Biden administration's summit.) This has limited options for law enforcement in the United States, Europe and other countries.</p>

But in the past few months, American officials have changed tack. Last week, the State Department announced a \$10 million reward for anyone who could help provide information about the leaders of DarkSide, a ransomware group alternately known as BlackMatter, which was behind the hack of Colonial Pipeline last May.

Mr. Biden said on Monday that when he met with Russian President Vladimir V. Putin in June, he made clear that the U.S. “would take action to hold cybercriminals accountable.”

American officials have also started clawing back ransom payments from cybercriminals, as they did in the case of DarkSide last June and with Mr. Polyanin, as announced on Monday.

“The message is: ‘You might think we can’t arrest you because you’re living in Russia, but there are a lot of other ways we can get to you,’” said Allan Liska, an intelligence analyst at Recorded Future, a cybersecurity firm. “This kind of sustained, cooperative law enforcement operation is making it far more expensive to conduct ransomware attacks and it’s starting to scare them.”

Over the past few weeks, members of REvil and DarkSide have both gone dark, signing off from cybercriminal forums on the Dark Web. “They’re signing off and staying off,” said Mr. Liska. “We’re used to seeing these groups pop back up in different forms, but I’m not so sure we’re going to see REvil and DarkSide again.”

When asked at a news conference whether the Russian government condoned the effort to rein in ransomware criminals, or was cooperating in efforts to detain Mr. Polyanin, Mr. Garland said that he could not comment because the investigation was ongoing.

“We expect and hope that any government in which one of these actors is residing will do everything it can to provide that person to us for prosecution,” he said.

Last week, the Justice Department located a Russian cybercriminal who was hiding out South Korea, and the department worked with other governments to get the accused man into a U.S. courtroom, Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco said at the news conference announcing the indictments.

The enforcement actions undertaken last week and on Monday show that “we’ll use all tools and partners to hold accountable bad actors,” Ms. Monaco said.

The Justice Department said that it would continue to escalate its fight against cybercrime, which it sees as a serious economic and national security threat. In an interview last week with the Associated Press, Ms. Monaco said that more arrests and seizures of ransom payments were imminent.

But even as cybersecurity experts applauded the latest moves against REvil and its affiliates on Monday, other ransomware gangs continued to attack American cities, counties and even police departments.

Just after the Justice Department announced its latest charges on Monday, a ransomware gang called Pysa — the subject of an F.B.I. warning last year — started leaking data from more than 50 new victims. Among them were the town of Bridgeport, W. Va., and a school in Omaha. Another ransomware group, called Grief, hit a police department in Fulton, N.Y.

The latest targets did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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## Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	11/09 Australia terror cell leader appeal fails
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.news.com.au/national/victoria/courts-law/melbourne-terror-cell-leader-abdul-nacer-benbrika-appeal-fails/news-story/c9f34700d9382c8fa31819fafaab4e7a">https://www.news.com.au/national/victoria/courts-law/melbourne-terror-cell-leader-abdul-nacer-benbrika-appeal-fails/news-story/c9f34700d9382c8fa31819fafaab4e7a</a>
GIST	<p>A terrorist who once professed admiration for Osama bin Laden failed to overturn a court decision keeping him behind bars for longer.</p> <p>Abdul Nacer Benbrika has spent 15 years behind bars after he was found guilty and jailed for being the “guiding light” of Australia’s largest terrorist network and was due to be released last year.</p> <p>But lawyers for Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton successfully argued to keep him in jail until 2023 under a continuing detention order.</p> <p>Victorian Supreme Court Justice Andrew Tinney found Benbrika remained an unacceptable risk to the community and there was a “whiff of implausibility” about claims he renounced violent jihad.</p> <p>The judge ordered the convicted terrorist to stay behind bars, but the 61-year-old appealed the decision during a hearing last month.</p> <p>However, Court of Appeal Justices David Beach, Stephen McLeish and Maree Kennedy threw out the legal challenge on Tuesday.</p> <p>“It is the unanimous view of the court that this appeal should be dismissed,” Justice Beach said.</p> <p>The convicted terrorist’s lawyer Dan Star QC argued during the appeal the judge should have specified the offences Benbrika was at risk of committing if released.</p> <p>They shouldn’t be left “guessing”, Mr Star said.</p> <p>Benbrika was first arrested in 2005 as one of more than a dozen people caught up with Operation Pendennis, one of the country’s largest counter-terrorism investigations.</p> <p>The terror leader and father of seven was a known supporter of bin Laden and was described as the “guiding light” of the terror network.</p> <p>He was stripped of his citizenship in 2020 and he now holds an ex-citizen visa, which allows him to remain in Australia but not re-enter if he were deported.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 UK infamous ‘White Widow’ in Yemen?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.arabnews.com/node/1963851/middle-east">https://www.arabnews.com/node/1963851/middle-east</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON: One of the UK’s most wanted terrorists, Samantha Lewthwaite, is believed to be in Yemen fighting government forces, The Sun has reported.</p> <p>“Lewthwaite’s last known location is Yemen,” an anonymous source told the British newspaper.</p> <p>Lewthwaite — also sometimes known by her “White Widow” moniker — has been linked to a slew of terrorist attacks in the UK, Africa and the Middle East.</p> <p>Her husband was one of the suicide bombers who attacked London on July 7, 2005, killing 56.</p> <p>Lewthwaite, 37, was linked to a 2013 attack in Kenya that saw five Britons and 66 others killed.</p> <p>Security services also believe her to be behind other atrocities, including the 2015 killing of nearly 150 people by Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab in Kenya, The Sun reported.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>Its source said: “Trying to get intelligence there is as tough as in Syria when the IS (Daesh) regime was at its height. There’s virtually no Western presence in Yemen because it’s so dangerous. And in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it’s assumed she’s alive and being supported by extremists.”</p> <p>She is now understood to have recruited female suicide bombers in Yemen for attacks against government forces, paying their families around \$4,000 per attack.</p> <p>Lewthwaite is also thought to have recruited boys as young as 15 for suicide attacks, plying them with drugs, including heroin, in order to carry them out.</p> <p>An Interpol Red Notice warrant was issued for her arrest after the 2013 attack in Kenya, but her capture has proved difficult as she has been moving from Africa to the Middle East working alongside terrorist organizations.</p> <p>Lewthwaite converted to Islam as a teenager after being exposed to the teachings of extremist cleric Trevor Forrest, who was jailed and subsequently deported to Jamaica for inciting hatred and supporting terrorist groups, including Daesh.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Taliban seeks military purge IS infiltrators</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-09/taliban-look-to-purge-military-of-islamic-state-infiltrators">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-09/taliban-look-to-purge-military-of-islamic-state-infiltrators</a>
GIST	<p>The Taliban are carrying out background checks within their ranks as they look to identify and capture infiltrators from rival Islamic State, which has carried out several deadly attacks across Afghanistan since the militant group took power in August.</p> <p>“Anyone who’s seen as harmful to the government or people of Afghanistan and misusing the authority of the government will be removed from our ranks and eliminated,” Ahmadullah Wasiq, a spokesman of Taliban, said over the phone. “We have also seen reports of unknown armed men entering private homes or punishing people in the name of Taliban.”</p> <p>A local offshoot of the Islamic State continues to be one of the biggest threats to the Taliban, carrying out at least five major attacks since the chaotic U.S. evacuation. The latest violence took place on Nov 2., when gunmen stormed a military hospital in the capital, <a href="#">killing</a> about 20 people including a senior Taliban commander. No claimed responsibility for the attack but the Taliban has blamed the rival group.</p> <p>Targeted killings of former government officials, including police and prosecutors, have also been reported. Four civil society activists and four members of the earlier Afghan police force were recently <a href="#">found dead</a> in northern Mazar-e-Sharif city. Locals blamed the Taliban for their deaths.</p> <p>Soon after the Taliban swept into power, there were <a href="#">reports</a> many armed members of the group went door-to-door to find and kill opponents or those who worked with the previous government or U.S. forces over the past two decades. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed would not comment on those reports but had vowed the militant group would investigate them.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Fear: violence rises under Taliban rule</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/asia-pacific/1636436218-afghans-fear-total-chaos-as-violence-rises-under-taliban-rule">https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/asia-pacific/1636436218-afghans-fear-total-chaos-as-violence-rises-under-taliban-rule</a>
GIST	<p>'I have never been as terrified as I am now,' a university professor in Afghanistan said</p> <p>Stability in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan is increasingly under strain after a number of attacks in the country, worsening Afghan fears of renewed civil strife.</p>

	<p>Though Taliban officials assert the movement has established a more secure Afghanistan, the ruling faction is facing challenges from both random acts of violence and a targeted campaign from the nation's Islamic State group: Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K).</p> <p>Activists, journalists, Islamic religious leaders, Taliban members, former officials in ex-president Ashraf Ghani's administration, and even everyday civilians have been attacked or killed throughout the state.</p> <p>Many Afghans are worried that the situation could devolve into sectarian conflict on a larger scale, or worse, total anarchy.</p> <p>"I have never been as terrified as I am now," an anonymous university professor from Nangarhar province explained, calling the situation one of "total chaos."</p> <p>The country's IS-K faction is also presenting a security challenge for the Taliban.</p> <p>IS-K claimed responsibility for several attacks throughout the country, including a strike on Afghanistan's largest military hospital, which killed at least 25 people.</p> <p>On Monday, Washington expressed concern on the faction's increased activity in Afghanistan.</p> <p>United States Special Representative for Afghanistan Tom West explained the US was "worried about the uptick in [IS-K] attacks, and we want the Taliban to be successful against them."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Militancy arc: East, Central, Southern Africa</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/the-arc-of-jihad-the-ecosystem-of-militancy-in-east-central-and-southern-africa/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/terrorism-study/the-arc-of-jihad-the-ecosystem-of-militancy-in-east-central-and-southern-africa/</a>
GIST	<p>According to the Global Terrorism Database, terrorism has steadily been on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa since 2004. The years that followed saw the establishment of two notable al-Qaeda affiliates: the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the forerunner of al-Shabaab, in Somalia in 2006 and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in 2007, based primarily between the borders of southern Algeria and northern Mali. Within a short period of time, the ICU and its predecessors had posed enough of a threat to draw the United States, Ethiopia and the region at large into a military intervention in Somalia.</p> <p>By 2018, sub-Saharan Africa surpassed North Africa and the Middle East in terms of the number of casualties as a result of terrorist attacks perpetrated by militant Islamists. This shift coincided with the collapse of Islamic State's physical caliphate in Iraq and Syria, which led the group to begin making overtures for regional wilayats in Africa. In doing so, Islamic State (IS) had to contend with devoted al-Qaeda affiliates, which led to deadly clashes, but also was able to capitalise on emerging factions, aspiring IS insurgents and extremist networks.</p> <p>Between 2015 and 2019, IS acquired four affiliates in sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel: in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso the Islamic State in Greater Sahara; in Nigeria the Islamic State West African Province; in Somalia the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS); and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique the Islamic State Central African Province (ISCAP). As a result, since 2015 the number of incidents involving battles with security forces, explosions and remote violence against civilians has been on a steady increase, with 2020 marking the deadliest year across the Sahel, West, Central and East Africa.</p>
	<a href="#">Return to Top</a> <a href="#">Read more at ICSR</a>

HEADLINE	<b>11/09 Life inside Taliban-run Afghanistan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/qj87mb/intimate-portraits-of-life-inside-taliban-run-afghanistan">https://www.vice.com/en/article/qj87mb/intimate-portraits-of-life-inside-taliban-run-afghanistan</a>
GIST	When French photo reporter <a href="#">Adrien Vautier</a> travelled to <a href="#">Afghanistan</a> from Uzbekistan in early September of 2021, his passport was stamped by the country's new rulers, the Taliban. Weeks earlier, on the 15th of

August, Kabul had fallen into Taliban hands after their troops swiftly took over the country, capturing all major cities in just [ten days](#).

The capture of Kabul marked the end of the country's [20-year war](#), which saw the first Taliban regime – which governed between 1996 and 2001 – overthrown by the US invasion. But since then, civilians in the country have known no peace, as multiple [bomb attacks](#), [violent protests](#), chaotic [scrambles to leave](#) the country, US [drone strikes](#) and Taliban [arbitrary executions](#) have claimed hundreds of lives.

“There were many refugees in the city who lived in really worrying conditions in the parks of Kabul,” said Vautier. In the weeks following the takeover, he saw residents queuing up in long lines in front of the banks, trying to recover their savings. But as per a new Taliban measure intended to discourage people from leaving the country, Afghans can now only take out up to €170 a week. “In the next six months, the situation is likely to become really catastrophic,” Vautier continued.

Although the radical Islamist movement has become infamous for its incredible military feat, much of the people who make up Taliban troops are not professional soldiers. The group's members are diverse – some joined it [in protest](#) of Kabul's former US-sponsored government, others to avenge loved ones who were victims of US attacks. Many were [recruited as children](#) while they were studying in Madrasas, Islamic schools that are often the only educational option for impoverished children in isolated communities.

“The Taliban in Kabul looked like soldiers on leave, who were discovering recreational activities for the first time,” Vautier said. During his days in the capital, he followed the strange cohabitation between civilians and Islamist forces in the heart of the city, looking at surreal scenes of Taliban soldiers visiting zoos and [amusement parks](#). “That first day in Kabul made me realise that the Taliban in the capital were quite different from those in other regions,” Vautier said. “I wondered if that was because the troops in Kabul were mainly young people from the mountains.”

Be it extremists, mercenaries, [ethnic minorities](#) or [disillusioned farmers](#) only fighting part-time, the Taliban clearly managed to rally the masses towards a common cause – the establishment of a self-governed Islamic state independent from foreign influence. Talking to families in Mazār-i-Sharīf, Afghanistan's fourth-largest city, Vautier confirmed that popular opinions about the Taliban takeover are mixed.

Some families were trying to quickly gather what they could and leave the country. “Seeing the Taliban back in power meant a loss of freedom for them. It's a cause of great concern for the future,” he said. Meanwhile, others were relieved to finally see the fighting come to an end, and hoped the Taliban interim government would finally bring some stability to the country.

On his trips between Afghan cities, Vautier saw Taliban operate automatic weapons and Humvees [abandoned by US troops](#) during their retreat, in apparent perfect condition. During most of his stay in the country, things carried on as normal, shrouded in an eerie quietness. But one day, in Kabul, violence erupted during demonstrations all over the city, including one he was covering.

“From then on, working started to get trickier,” Vautier said. “The Taliban prohibited me from taking photos of the demonstrators. They were very nervous, shooting in the air, shoving everyone around.” Once he got back to his hotel, he saw one of the windows of the room he was sharing with other journalists had been broken. “A protest passed in front of our hotel and a journalist started filming it from his room,” he said. “So, to put us under a bit of pressure, the Taliban shot near him with a machine gun.”

During the past two months of Taliban rule, the new interim government has tried to position itself as a collaborator with international forces, only interested in self-governance after decades of international interference. The so-called [Taliban 2.0](#) have vowed to respect human rights, and especially women's rights, on their territory. But experts think these claims are incompatible with the group's ideology and are just a front to ensure civilians will continue to receive humanitarian aid while the country's economy is still in shambles.

	In the meantime, the Taliban's <a href="#">conflict with ISIS-K</a> (Islamic State Khorasan Province, the local branch of the Islamic caliphate organisation) is picking up, with deadly consequences for civilians. Amid a looming humanitarian crisis and increased internal threats, it seems that stability is still a long shot away for Afghan families.
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 US scrambles for bases in central Asia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/us-scrambles-bases-central-asia-after-afghanistan/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/8/us-scrambles-bases-central-asia-after-afghanistan/</a>
GIST	<p>President Biden is racing to find partners in Central Asia willing to host U.S. troops, equipment and intelligence assets that the Pentagon says are vital to keep al Qaeda, ISIS and other extremist outfits from launching deadly attacks out of Afghanistan, even as China and Russia expand their power in the strategically vital region and work to elbow out Washington.</p> <p>More than two months after the last troops left Afghanistan, Pentagon and State Department officials have been tight-lipped about behind-the-scenes talks with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other nations that represent the best long-term candidates to host American forces and equipment. Among other things, a base in one of those countries would likely serve as a U.S. hub for drone strikes against terrorists across the theater, including targets that are expected to appear in Afghanistan with the Taliban back in power.</p> <p>U.S. manned and drone missions are currently organized out of bases in the Middle East 1,000 miles from the Afghanistan theater, often too far to make a difference when a target is sighted or a clash erupts. Taliban leaders are adamantly opposed to allowing U.S. and allied forces back into Afghanistan and insist they can deal with any terrorist operations in the country.</p> <p>The U.S. struggle to secure a base in the region underscores a shifting global power landscape that has left Mr. Biden with limited leverage. The withdrawal from Afghanistan fueled a narrative that the U.S. is pulling back from the region, creating an even bigger window of opportunity for rivals that are eager to fill a power vacuum.</p> <p>Indeed, some counterterrorism analysts say the White House has bungled the process and hasn't proved it is more capable than its leading global rival, China, at forging military alliances with governments in Central Asia. Russia's significant sway and historical links in the region also complicate the U.S. effort. The Kremlin is privately and publicly lobbying Afghanistan's neighbors to refuse entreaties from Washington.</p> <p>The U.S. and its allies "bear the main responsibility among foreign actors for normalizing life in Afghanistan since their presence actually led to the current situation ...," Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters after meeting with U.S. Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland for three days of talks in Moscow last month. "We strongly reaffirmed the unacceptability to Russia of any form of U.S. military presence in Central Asian countries," he said, according to the Interfax news service.</p> <p><b>Rising sense of urgency</b></p> <p>The lack of presence in an unstable part of the world has lent a great deal of urgency to the U.S. search for a new base. Analysts warn that the current dynamic is untenable and carries major security risks, even though the Pentagon insists its "over-the-horizon" capabilities are sufficient.</p> <p>"Flying drones from eight hours away in the Persian Gulf is not a long-term, durable solution. The Central Asian countries are geographically much better suited. It seems to me the Biden administration should be engaging with those countries to show how it is in their interest for the United States to conduct operations out of their territory," said Nathan Sales, the State Department's counterterrorism coordinator under President Trump. "The last thing those countries want to see is a resurgent al Qaeda that will threaten them. The last thing those countries want to see is a resurgent ISIS that will threaten them. The United States is in a position to help.</p>

“If the Biden administration is serious about competing with China and about countering terrorism, they have to do at least as well as China has done at persuading Central Asian countries to grant military basing rights,” Mr. Sales said.

Indeed, China is rumored to be eyeing a military base in Tajikistan, though both nations have publicly denied that such an arrangement is imminent. Asked about those rumors two weeks ago, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said his nation does not operate a base in the theater, but he did not directly address whether China plans to build facilities near Tajikistan’s border with Afghanistan.

“I can also confirm that there is no Chinese military base in Central Asia,” he said on Oct. 29.

With concerns about Islamist terrorist groups targeting its western lands, China has made no secret of its desire to exert greater influence over Central Asia. Military expansion into the region would make sense in light of the Chinese Communist Party’s broader goal of supplanting the U.S. as the world’s most influential player.

While China is coy with its approach, Russia is direct. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has blasted the U.S. effort to set up bases of operation near Afghanistan.

Russia is “well aware of the Americans’ intrusiveness,” he said last week, according to Russia’s state-run Tass news agency. “I do not rule out that they will be pressing for the same aim from different sides.”

Pentagon officials also have discussed with their Russian counterparts the possibility of using facilities in former Soviet republics near Afghanistan, including Russian sites in Uzbekistan. That arrangement does not appear to have moved past the initial discussion phase.

U.S. officials are in talks with other regional governments, though the details are murky. Uzbekistan, which hosted American military assets during the early years of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, appears to be the leading candidate, with Tajikistan also under consideration.

The administration also thinks Pakistan could be a workable option.

“We are in conversations with Pakistan to keep the air line of communication open. We have also had conversations with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan,” Colin Kahl, the Pentagon’s undersecretary of defense for policy, told the Senate Armed Services Committee last week after lawmakers pressed him on America’s long-term counterterrorism strategy in and around Afghanistan.

Questions have been raised about what the Biden administration may be willing to offer in return for basing U.S. counterterrorism assets. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, New York Democrat, pressed Mr. Kahl on that question last week.

“We have some very specific ideas, but on that score ... it is very sensitive,” he said. He told lawmakers he would discuss details in a classified setting.

The State Department also offered little clarity on where the effort stands.

“Fighting the scourge of terrorism is a global effort. We will continue to engage partners, allies, and key states around the world on how best to address it,” a State Department spokesperson said in a statement to The Washington Times. “Beyond that, we have nothing further to share regarding our deliberations on counterterrorism scenarios.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Military: can't find ISIS safe house in Kabul
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/isis-military.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20Politics">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/politics/isis-military.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20Politics</a>



WASHINGTON — The U.S. military has not located a suspected [Islamic State](#) safe house in Kabul, Afghanistan, that officials initially said led to an American drone strike on Aug. 29 that mistakenly killed 10 civilians, including seven children, according to two senior military officials.

Two days before the drone strike, military officials said they had determined through electronic intercepts, aerial surveillance and informants that ISIS planners were using a compound about three miles northwest of the Kabul airport to facilitate future attacks involving rockets, suicide explosive vests and car bombs.

But an inquiry into the drone strike by the Air Force's inspector general, Lt. Gen. Sami D. Said, said that was wrong. "We have not found any particular safe house," he said in a telephone interview after [making his findings public last week](#).

General Said would not discuss the underlying information that led military analysts to focus on the safe house — and even dispatch six Reaper drones to monitor it — other than to say, "It was not faulty intelligence; it was just not specific." A second U.S. military official confirmed that the available intelligence on the location was not precise enough.

Nearly everything senior defense officials asserted in the hours, then days and weeks, after the drone strike has turned out to be false. The explosives the military claimed were loaded in the trunk of a white Toyota sedan struck by the drone's Hellfire missile were probably water bottles, and a secondary explosion in the courtyard in a densely populated Kabul neighborhood where the attack took place was probably a propane or gas tank, officials said.

Senior Defense Department leaders have conceded that the driver of the car, Zemari Ahmadi, a longtime worker for a U.S. aid group, had nothing to do with the [Islamic State](#), contrary to what military officials had previously asserted. Mr. Ahmadi's only connection to the terrorist group appeared to be a fleeting and innocuous interaction with people in what the military believed was an ISIS safe house in Kabul.

But now Pentagon officials say that judgment was also mistaken, after an [investigation by The New York Times](#) that the safe house's location was actually the residence of Mr. Ahmadi's boss, who American military officials also say has no ties to ISIS.

General Said found no violations of law and did not recommend any disciplinary action. He said a series of assumptions, made over the course of eight hours as U.S. officials tracked the white Toyota Corolla through Kabul, caused what he called "confirmation bias," leading to the drone strike.

General Said's investigation made several recommendations for fixing the process through which strikes are ordered, including new measures to cut down the risk of confirmation bias and a review of the procedures used to determine whether civilians are present.

Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III has approved General Said's findings and recommendations, the chief Pentagon spokesman, John F. Kirby, said last week, and has left it up to the four-star generals leading the military's Central and Special Operations commands to decide, probably in the next few weeks, whether anyone should be disciplined or rebuked for the strike.

In describing his investigation, General Said said last week that surveillance videos showed at least one child in the area some two minutes before the military launched the drone strike. But the general also said that footage would have been easy to miss in real time.

In the subsequent interview, General Said provided additional details, saying that nine seconds before military operators fired the missile, surveillance video showed the presence of four adults and two children — the largest number of people captured on video before the strike. According to General Said, that group of people — in addition to Mr. Ahmadi and his cousin, whom analysts clearly saw before launching the strike — would have also been easy to miss.

Separately, three U.S. officials said on Monday that the C.I.A. had alerted the military to the presence of a child at the strike site on Aug. 29 but that military officials said the warning came too late — after the missile was launched.

General Said and other top military officials, including Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of the Central Command, have sought to put the drone strike into the context of the moment, with American officials at a heightened state of alert after a suicide bombing at the Kabul airport three days earlier killed about 170 civilians and 13 U.S. troops.

The military's first mistake was incorrectly identifying a family home as an Islamic State safe house. "In the 48 hours prior to the strike, sensitive intelligence indicated that the compound at point No. 1 on the map was being used by ISIS-K planners, used to facilitate future attacks," General McKenzie told reporters at his Sept. 17 briefing, referring to an Islamic State affiliate.

Another recurring aspect of the intelligence, General McKenzie said, was that ISIS would use a white Toyota Corolla as a key element in the next attack against American troops at the airport.

At 8:52 a.m. on Aug. 29, a white Toyota Corolla — Mr. Ahmadi's sedan — arrived at what the military believed was an ISIS safe house.

But witness testimony and visual evidence gathered by The Times indicate that this compound was most likely the home of Mr. Ahmadi's boss, the country director of Nutrition and Education International, a California-based aid group. The director had asked Mr. Ahmadi to stop by his home to pick up his laptop on the way to work that morning.

According to General Said, military analysts suspected on Aug. 29 that the suicide bomber had at some point three days earlier carried explosives in a black bag similar to a laptop bag. Seeing a black bag being exchanged at a suspected ISIS safe house the morning of the attack was yet another data point that generated confirmation bias, the general said.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Israel: Iran plot Africa attack on Jews foiled
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-plot-to-attack-israelis-jews-said-foiled-in-africa/">https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-plot-to-attack-israelis-jews-said-foiled-in-africa/</a>
GIST	<p>Five people have been arrested in African countries over suspicions that they were planning on carrying out attacks against Israeli tourists or businesspeople on behalf of Iran, an Israeli television network reported Sunday.</p> <p>The five, who had been in Senegal, Tanzania, and Ghana, were recruited by Iran's Quds Force expeditionary arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, according to the report from Channel 12 news, which did not attribute the information to a source.</p> <p>The five were arrested in the African countries by local intelligence, who were working off information obtained from "Western" spies, the channel said.</p> <p>According to intelligence information cited by the channel, the five were given special training and unspecified materials in Lebanon and then sent back to Africa with a cover story of being religious students, where they were given the mission of finding Jewish and Israeli targets to attack.</p> <p>Among the top targets were Israeli tourists on safari in Tanzania, the channel said.</p> <p>All five suspects were arrested before they could take any action, according to the report. It did not say when the arrests took place, but indicated they were still being questioned.</p> <p>Though the report credited the Israel's Mossad spy agency with foiling the plot, its role in the affair was not mentioned.</p>

	<p>There was no immediate confirmation of the report from authorities in Israel or the three African countries. The channel said Iranian officials denied any allegations against it, calling them “baseless.”</p> <p>The report would appear to point to the latest chapter in an ongoing covert war between Israel and Iran, including a number of alleged plots on the African continent.</p> <p>In February, The New York Times reported that a cell of Iranian operatives in Ethiopia had been recruited for an attack on diplomats from the United Arab Emirates over its normalization with Israel.</p> <p>In September, Cypriot officials arrested an Azerbaijani national over suspicions that he was part of a plot to attack Israeli businessmen on the island. Israeli officials have described the planned attack as an Iranian operation.</p> <p>Iran’s attempts to attack Israeli or Jewish interests have stepped up since the killing of its nuclear program chief Mohsen Fakhrizadeh a year ago, which Tehran blames on Jerusalem.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Kabul hospital: emaciated children; hunger</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/emaciated-children-kabul-hospital-point-rising-hunger-81033729">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/emaciated-children-kabul-hospital-point-rising-hunger-81033729</a>
GIST	<p>KABUL -- In Kabul's main children's hospital, 2½-year-old Guldana is sitting up in her bed, but she’s too exhausted to even open her eyes. Her tiny body is wrapped in a blanket, only her emaciated face showing.</p> <p>She’s one of a growing number of near-starving children who are brought every day to the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital in the Afghan capital. Hunger is increasing dramatically in Afghanistan, fueled by an economic crisis that has only gotten worse since the Taliban seized power in the country nearly three months ago.</p> <p>Guldana’s father, Jinnat Gul, said he can hardly afford to feed her and his other five children. He used to work going house to house collecting scrap goods and selling them. But for the past three months, work has dried up and he has hardly made any money.</p> <p>“Before, I had enough work, I could provide food. We could have meat one or two times a week,” he said. Now his family mainly gets by on boiled potatoes. He said sometimes he only has bread soaked in green tea for his children, “just to give them something so they stop crying.”</p> <p>The U.N.’s World Food Program said Monday that the number of people on the edge of famine has risen to 45 million in 43 countries. The number is up from 42 million earlier this year.</p> <p>Afghanistan is the source of most of that increase. The number of Afghans living in near-famine conditions has risen to 8.7 million, up by 3 million from earlier this year, the WFP said. Overall, almost 24 million people in Afghanistan, or 60% of the population, suffer from acute hunger. An estimated 3.2 million children under age 5 are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year.</p> <p>“It’s a crisis. It’s a catastrophe,” WFP Executive Director David Beasley said during a weekend visit to Afghanistan. The WFP is rushing in supplies to feed people as the harsh winter sets in, but it says it needs some \$220 million a month in 2022 to fund its effort.</p> <p>A severe drought this year in Afghanistan is one cause for increasing malnutrition. But also, more and more people simply don’t have money to buy food.</p> <p>The country’s economy had been rapidly declining under the previous U.S.-backed government, which struggled to pay salaries to its employees.</p>

Now the economy is in full-fledged meltdown after the Taliban seized power on Aug. 15. The Taliban government is mired in financial crisis, scrambling for cash. The U.S. and other Western countries have cut off direct financial assistance to the government that covered most of its budget; also, the Taliban government cannot access billions of dollars in Afghan national reserves held abroad. As a result, millions of Afghans have not received salaries for months.

Worsening the situation, hundreds of local health facilities around the country have had to scale back services or shut down completely because of the lack of international funding. That means families with children suffering from malnutrition have to go farther to get care — or get none at all.

The Indira Gandhi Children's Hospital had to expand its space dedicated to malnutrition cases from one room to three, said one doctor there, Salahuddin Salah. At least 25 children brought to the hospital over the past two months have died, he said. Most staff at the hospital, from doctors and nurses to cleaning staff, have not received their salaries in three months.

On Monday, when The Associated Press visited the hospital, there were 18 children in the malnutrition ward. The ward gets around 30 new cases a week, said Zia Mohammed, assistant director for nursing. "Since two and three months, our malnourished patients have increased day by day," he said.

In one bed, a 4-month-old boy named Mohammed was extremely emaciated, and the flesh was shriveled on his tiny limbs. His skin was so thin that the veins showed through on his forehead like a map of tiny blue lines.

Mohammed was born a month prematurely, and his mother died from complications in the birth. "She bled to death because we had no money to take her to the hospital," said Rahila, the second wife of Mohammed's father, who brought the baby to the hospital.

The father was in the military of the ousted government and so hasn't had an income since the Taliban takeover, Rahila said. They tried giving Mohammed milk bought from the market, but he got diarrhea from it, so they have mainly fed him tea-soaked bread, she said.

Jinnat Gul, Guldana's father, said he brought his daughter to Kabul a week ago from his home village, Shahr-e Now, in Baghlan Province, north of Kabul, after a hospital in the provincial capital said it didn't have supplies to treat her.

He said Guldana is not the only child suffering back home. "There's a lot of sick children in the village," he said, "but there's no doctor to say if it's malnutrition or not."

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Pakistan: 1mo. ceasefire Pakistani Taliban</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistan-announces-month-cease-fire-pakistani-taliban-81039137">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistan-announces-month-cease-fire-pakistani-taliban-81039137</a>
GIST	<p>ISLAMABAD -- Pakistani authorities Monday announced a month-long cease-fire with a key militant group behind numerous attacks on security forces and civilians over the last 14 years.</p> <p>Government spokesman Fawad Chaudhry said on Twitter that the Taliban government in Afghanistan helped facilitate the cease-fire between the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan.</p> <p>In a statement, TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khurasani confirmed the cease-fire beginning Nov. 9 will remain in place until Dec. 9, during which both sides will form a committee to continue talks. He said both sides will adhere to the cease-fire.</p> <p>The agreement was reached amid ongoing peace talks between the government and the TTP that began last month. Chaudry said the truce could be extended if talks continue to make progress.</p>

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is an umbrella group and is a separate organization from Afghanistan's Taliban, who seized power in August.

The TTP has been emboldened by the return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Chaudhry provided no details about the ongoing talks, during which he said both sides agreed on the cease-fire.

Authorities had earlier said that peace talks were taking place with TTP leaders in Afghanistan, where they have been hiding for the past several years. The TTP was formed by Pakistani militants in 2007 and since then thousands of people have been killed in scores of attacks claimed by the group in the past 14 years.

Chaudhry said elders from the former tribal regions were being kept abreast of the talks with the militant group. About a million people were displaced when Pakistan launched operations in the northwest in 2013 to clear out TTP fighters. They returned to their homes after 2017 when Pakistan claimed victory against the militants.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the leader of the opposition Pakistan People's Party, denounced the prime minister for not informing Parliament about the talks with TTP. He noted the group was behind a 2014 attack on an army-run school in the northwestern city of Peshawar that killed 154 people, mostly schoolchildren. Zardari said the party believes such an important matter should have been debated in Parliament.

Some Pakistanis criticized the government for holding talks with Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which has stepped up attacks on security forces in recent years, primarily in the northwest.

Before the Taliban came into power in Afghanistan, Islamabad and Kabul often blamed each other for sheltering militants. Pakistan says it has completed 90% of a fence being constructed along the border with Afghanistan to prevent cross-border militant attacks.

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	11/08 Threatening message against Tahoma HS
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/police-investigating-threatening-message-made-against-tahoma-high-school/SAL42HHD5GRZCGSFQM57XMEXE/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/police-investigating-threatening-message-made-against-tahoma-high-school/SAL42HHD5GRZCGSFQM57XMEXE/</a>
GIST	<p>MAPLE VALLEY, Wash. — Police are investigating a threatening message against Tahoma High School, according to a post from the school district.</p> <p>The district said it was made aware of a photo Monday evening that included a threatening message against the school. It notified officials who are investigating the threat.</p> <p>The person who sent the threat claimed to provide their name, the post said. The name doesn't belong to a Tahoma School District student and the district doesn't believe the person's name is associated with any of the students.</p> <p>The district said there will be police presence on campus tomorrow, according to a comment on the Facebook post.</p> <p>The district also said there is a previously scheduled lockdown drill at the high school Tuesday and families should not be alarmed when notified, it is unrelated to the threatening message.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Search continues Seattle FD deputy chief
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SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/teams-start-day-six-in-effort-to-find-missing-seattle-fire-deputy-chief-before-snowfall">https://komonews.com/news/local/teams-start-day-six-in-effort-to-find-missing-seattle-fire-deputy-chief-before-snowfall</a>
GIST	<p>ELLENSBURG, Wash. - More than 60 people are still searching for Seattle Fire Department deputy chief Jay Schreckengost.</p> <p>Schreckengost was reported missing last Wednesday when his family found his truck parked along a forest service road. Since, hundreds of volunteers, SFD and other personnel have helped search for the chief.</p> <p>The chief was in the Cliffdell area for a hunting trip with his son.</p> <p>The Kittitas County Sheriff's Office said Monday morning it has search teams, about 60 people, using K9 teams, drones and helicopters to find him before 'significant' snow falls in the area.</p> <p>If you have any information about where Shreckengost may be, you're asked to call 509-925-8534.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Report: 11yrs reduce carbon or catastrophe</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/report-earth-has-11-years-to-reduce-carbon-emissions-to-avoid-climate-catastrophe">https://www.q13fox.com/news/report-earth-has-11-years-to-reduce-carbon-emissions-to-avoid-climate-catastrophe</a>
GIST	<p>A new report reveals the world is going backward in combating greenhouse gas pollution, and if the problem isn't fixed in 11 years, the world's average temperature will rise and hit a dangerous mark.</p> <p>The annual <a href="#">Global Carbon Budget report</a> said the global fossil carbon dioxide emissions are returning to their 2019 levels after decreasing by 5.4% — 1.9 billion tons — in 2020. The report said emissions rose by 4.9% in 2021.</p> <p>Pierre Friedlingstein, who authored the report, said the 2020 drop was due to the global COVID-19 lockdown when many people stopped driving and flying as stay-at-home orders were enforced. But as the economy rebounded and reopened, he said many coal and carbon emissions levels are starting to rise as people return to their pre-pandemic routines.</p> <p>"In a sense, it was to be expected," Friedlingstein told FOX Television Stations Monday. "When your car is still the same car. The plane is still the same plane... things haven't been changed during the pandemic."</p> <p>Friedlingstein said what's even more concerning is that the global temperature could rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit if countries don't take steps now to reduce carbon emissions. The 2015 Paris climate agreement set the temperature limit.</p> <p>Friedlingstein said if the world hits the mark, we could see frequent extreme weather over the next couple of decades.</p> <p>"Wildfires in the U.S., wildfires in Russia," he continued. "Massive floods in western Europe."</p> <p>Friedlingstein urged countries to come together and commit to reducing carbon emissions.</p> <p>World leaders promised to protect Earth's forests, cut methane emissions and help South Africa wean itself off coal at the U.N. climate summit last week — part of a flurry of deals intended to avert catastrophic global warming.</p> <p>Britain hailed the commitment by more than 100 countries to end deforestation in the coming decade as the first big achievement of the conference in the Scottish city of Glasgow, known as COP26 — but experts noted such promises have been made and broken before.</p> <p>Forests are important ecosystems and provide a critical way of absorbing carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere. But the value of wood as a commodity and the growing demand</p>



for agricultural and pastoral land are leading to widespread and often illegal felling of forests, particularly in developing countries. Indigenous peoples are often among the hardest hit.

Brazil's government has been eager to project itself as a responsible environmental steward in the wake of surging deforestation and fires in the Amazon rainforest and Pantanal wetlands that sparked global outrage in recent years. Critics caution that its promises should be viewed with skepticism, and the country's president, Jair Bolsonaro, is an outspoken proponent of developing the Amazon.

Last week, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden launched a plan to reduce methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming. The announcement was part of a broader effort with the European Union and other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.

Clamping down on methane flaring and leaks from oil wells and gas pipelines — the focus of the Biden plan — is considered one of the easiest ways to cut emissions. Reducing methane from agriculture, in particular by belching cows, is a trickier matter.

Separately, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany announced a plan to provide \$8.5 billion in loans and grants over five years to help South Africa phase out coal.

South Africa gets about 90% of its electricity from coal-fired plants, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Tens of thousands of climate activists marched over the weekend to condemn government leaders for failing to produce the fast action they say is needed, with some echoing activist Greta Thunberg's view last week that the talks were just more "blah, blah, blah."

Thunberg's dismissive talk of the two-week climate summit has touched a nerve inside and outside the summit site. Government leaders and negotiators insist they are as equally aware as the marchers of the urgency of their task, with time slipping away to rein in pollution from fossil fuels before the Earth faces much higher levels of warming.

Marchers held signs with messages including "Code Red for Humanity," "Stop big polluters," "COP26, we are watching you" or simply "I'm angry." One sign asked "If not you, then who? If not now, then when?"

The climate protest movement — and the worsening droughts, storms, floods, wildfires and other disasters around the world this year — have brought home to many the accelerating damage of global warming and have kept the pressure on governments for stronger and faster action to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

Also over the weekend, Biden hailed Congress' passage of his \$1 trillion infrastructure package as a "monumental step forward for the nation" after fractious fellow Democrats resolved a months-long standoff in their ranks to seal the deal.

But a second, larger bill that deals with climate change hangs in the balance.

That 10-year, \$1.85 trillion measure bolstering health, family and climate change programs was sidetracked after moderates demanded a cost estimate on the measure from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The postponement dashed hopes that the day would produce a double-barreled win for Biden with passage of both bills.

The package would provide some \$555 billion in tax breaks encouraging cleaner energy and electric vehicles, the nation's largest commitment to tackling climate change.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Popularity e-bikes not slowing down
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/business/e-bikes-urban-transit.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/business/e-bikes-urban-transit.html</a>

There is a joke told in transit circles about people who ride electric bicycles: How do you know if someone has an e-bike? They'll tell you.

The idea, of course, is that users of the battery-powered two-wheelers tend to be proselytizers for the technology. Take Monte Paulsen, a building engineer in Vancouver, B.C., who used to drive a car five days a week. A former "fair-weather cyclist," he rode his bike maybe twice a month, weather permitting.

The pandemic, he decided, was a good time to buy a RadWagon, an electric cargo bike from Rad Power Bikes, a top-selling e-bike company headquartered in Seattle. Now, Paulsen said, he makes 90% of his trips on it.

"I started as a personal experiment to see how I could lower my carbon footprint," he said. "I've stuck with it because it's really fun."

Modern life is peppered with moments of discovery around mobility: the first car drive as a teenager; the first trip on a train, plane or bus, watching the world from a window seat. In this decade, that moment is increasingly likely to be an inaugural ride on an e-bike, often said to spark a childlike joy, thrilling and freeing.

Indeed, e-bikes are everywhere. The pandemic bike boom boosted e-bike sales 145% from 2019 to 2020, more than double the rate of classic bikes, according to the market research firm NPD Group.

While estimates vary, industry experts put the number of e-bikes Americans brought home in 2020 somewhere around half a million. (In comparison, they bought 231,000 all-electric cars in that time period, according to the Pew Research Center.)

And that growth does not seem to be slowing. Deloitte projected that between 2020 and 2023, 130 million e-bikes would be sold worldwide. At the moment, e-bikes — not cars — appear to be the world's bestselling electric vehicle.

That sort of trend has the potential to transform urban transit. Many short car trips could be replaced, hypothetically, with a short, brisk e-bike ride. So what would it take to get there?

The exploding appetite for electrified rides is a product of three trends unfolding simultaneously, said David Zipper, a visiting fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and a specialist in new forms of mobility technology.

The first is the rapid development of lithium-ion batteries. Used to power electric cars, these batteries "have gotten smaller, more efficient and cheaper," Zipper said, allowing their use in scooters, mopeds and bicycles.

The second, he said, is a worldwide resurgence of interest in urban cycling over the last decade. And the third is what he called the "gateway drug" of bike-sharing programs, which allow riders to try e-bikes without buying one.

"You put those together and it's a sort of natural outgrowth," said Zipper, who uses Washington's Capital Bikeshare, or CaBi, regularly. "E-bikes capitalize on all of those things."

Most e-bikes fall into three categories. With the first, pedal assist, riders are given a motorized boost, like an invisible hand is pushing them forward. The second, a throttle, allows the rider to zoom around, up to 20 mph, without pedaling, and is commonly used by delivery drivers and couriers. And the last is a faster pedal assist, allowing speeds of at least 28 mph.

For New York's Citi Bike, the electric-blue pedal-assist bikes make up 20% of the fleet but carry 35% of all rides, according to internal data provided by Lyft, its parent company. Given that monthly Citi Bike rides have topped three million four times this year, that's a lot.

Laura Fox, the general manager of Citi Bike at Lyft, said that for longer trips, e-bikes dominate.

"There is clear data that people want to try them," Fox said. "And when they do, that becomes the dominant mode selection for them."

One study found that people cycle at least twice as much when they own an e-bike, which combats criticism that the ease of riding makes it a less effective activity, proponents say. Riders may not be sweating as much, but if they're biking longer and more frequently, they could be getting more exercise.

Greater regular use could also be critical to reducing car trips. In Norway, which has a national bike network, car usage dropped among e-bike users as they learned how far they could go on one.

In the United States, getting more people to travel by e-bike does come with obstacles. E-bikes do not qualify for commuter tax benefits that cover public transit and parking, and they remain expensive, with prices ranging from less than \$1,000 to nearly \$10,000.

A provision in Congress would offer tax credits and commuter benefits for e-bikes, mirroring incentives in countries like France.

But experts say people won't use electric bikes if riders aren't comfortable and if there isn't infrastructure that allows them to feel safe. Vancouver's bike-friendly streets were "half the equation" when he started riding more, Paulsen said.

Some countries are ahead of the United States on that front. In Britain, the government is offering tax credits for e-bikes and funds local efforts to expand bike lanes. According to one figure from the market research company Mintel, the e-bike market there saw a 70% jump this last year, with 170,000 sold in 2020.

But there have been challenges — ones that entrepreneurs are trying to address. When he was studying electrical engineering at college in London, Adebola Adeleye used Santander Cycles, the city's bike-share program, to get around. But he noticed issues: the design of the bike, which was then approximately 51 pounds and is now closer to 45, was hefty for new riders.

"The style and the weight actually limited the amount of people who could get onto this product," Adeleye said.

So he started building a prototype in his bedroom, leading to the CrownCruiser, an electric bike that looks as if it rode off the set of "Blade Runner." Adeleye is now the chief executive of CrownCruiser Motors, a new e-bike startup. In an interview, Adeleye shared the screen with Mica Osbourne, a director at the company. The sleek, jet-black model is designed to cater to noncyclists. Fast, safe and stylish — to beat the car, one might have to think like a car.

"We want people to view their cars in the same way they view their bikes, which we don't think is happening at the moment," Osbourne said.

"We know a lot of people don't have confidence on a bicycle, and that's one of the reasons why we want this bike to set you apart," Adeleye said. If the bike can keep up and has ample space to move, then zipping past traffic becomes an afterthought. "Because then you won't think about the traffic. You want to give people that freedom."

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/09/1bn-people-will-suffer-extreme-heat-at-just-2c-heating-say-scientists">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/09/1bn-people-will-suffer-extreme-heat-at-just-2c-heating-say-scientists</a>
GIST	<p>A billion people will be affected by extreme heat stress if the climate crisis raises the global temperature by just 2C, according to research released by the UK Met Office at the <a href="#">Cop26</a> climate summit. The scientists said that would be a 15-fold increase on the numbers exposed today.</p> <p>The key goal of <a href="#">Cop26</a> is to keep the chance of limiting global heating to 1.5C alive but delegates said there is <a href="#">much work to do</a> to achieve this in the summit's final week.</p> <p>The Met Office assessed wet-bulb temperature, which combines both heat and humidity. Once this measure reaches 35C, the human body cannot cool itself by sweating and even healthy people sitting in the shade will die within six hours. The Met Office analysis used a wet-bulb temperature limit of 32C, at which workers must rest regularly to avoid heat exhaustion, for at least 10 days a year.</p> <p>If efforts to end the climate emergency fail and temperatures rise by 4C, half of the world's population will suffer from this extreme heat stress.</p> <p>Heat is the most obvious impact of global heating and <a href="#">extreme heat in cities</a> across the world has tripled in recent decades, according to a recent study. In the summer of 2020, more than a <a href="#">quarter of the US population</a> suffered from the effects of extreme heat, with symptoms including nausea and cramps.</p> <p>At least 166,000 people died due to heatwaves around the globe in the two decades to 2017, according to the <a href="#">World Health Organization</a>. The UK government has been repeatedly warned by its official climate advisers that the country is "<a href="#">woefully unprepared</a>" for increased heat, particularly in vulnerable locations such as hospitals and schools.</p> <p>The Met Office analysis is derived from research from the EU-funded <a href="#">Helix</a> project, which also maps the rising risks of river flooding, wildfires, drought and food insecurity. Virtually the entire inhabited world is affected by at least one impact.</p> <p>Andy Wiltshire, at the Met Office, said: "Any one of the climate impacts presents a scary vision of the future. But, of course, severe climate change will drive many impacts, and our maps show that some regions will be affected by multiple factors."</p> <p>Tropical countries including Brazil, Ethiopia and <a href="#">India</a> are hardest hit by extreme heat stress, with some parts being <a href="#">pushed towards the limit of human liveability</a>. But Prof Albert Klein Tank, director of the Met Office Hadley Centre, said: "These maps reveal areas of the world where the gravest impacts are projected to occur. However, all regions of the world – including the UK and Europe – are expected to suffer continued impacts from climate change."</p> <p>Scientists have been warning about deadly levels of heat and humidity for some years. A 2015 study showing the Gulf in the Middle East, the heartland of the global oil industry, set to suffer <a href="#">heatwaves beyond the limit of human survival</a> if climate change is unchecked.</p> <p>The deadliest place on the planet for extreme future heatwaves will be the <a href="#">north China plain</a>, one of the most densely populated regions in the world and the most important food-producing area in the huge nation, according to 2018 research.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Oceans study: 26 tons plastic Covid waste</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/08/about-26000-tonnes-of-plastic-covid-waste-pollutes-worlds-oceans-study">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/08/about-26000-tonnes-of-plastic-covid-waste-pollutes-worlds-oceans-study</a>
GIST	Plastic waste from the Covid-19 pandemic weighing 25,900 tonnes, equivalent to more than 2,000 double decker buses, has leaked into the ocean, research has revealed.

The mismanaged plastic waste, consisting of personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves, vastly exceeded the capability of countries to process it properly, researchers said.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, an estimated 8.4m tonnes of plastic waste has been generated from 193 countries, according to the report, published on Monday.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increased demand for single-use plastics that intensifies pressure on an already out-of-control global plastic waste problem,” said Yiming Peng and Peipei Wu from Nanjing University, the authors of [Magnitude and impact of pandemic-associated plastic waste](#) published in the online journal PNAS.

“The released plastics can be transported over long distances in the ocean, encounter marine wildlife, and potentially lead to injury or even death,” they added.

A [study in March](#) presented the first case of a fish entrapped in a medical glove, encountered during a canal cleanup in Leiden, the Netherlands. In Brazil a PFF-2 protective mask was [found in the stomach](#) of a dead Magellanic penguin.

The scientists predicted that by the end of the century almost all pandemic-associated plastics will end up on either the seabed or on beaches.

The Chinese study found that 46% of the mismanaged plastic waste came from Asia, due to the high level of mask-wearing by individuals there, followed by Europe, 24%, and North and South America, 22%.

Peng and Wu said their research suggested 87.4% of the excess waste was from hospitals, rather than from individual use. PPE usage by individuals contributed only 7.6% of the total, while packaging and test kits accounted for 4.7% and 0.3% respectively.

“Most of the plastic is from medical waste generated by hospitals that dwarfs the contribution from personal protection equipment and online-shopping package material,” they wrote.

“This poses a long-lasting problem for the ocean environment and is mainly accumulated on beaches and coastal sediments.”

The thousands of tonnes of masks, gloves, testing kits and face visors which leached into the oceans from the start of the pandemic up to August this year, were transported in 369 major rivers.

Chief among these were Shatt al-Arab in south-eastern Iraq, which carried 5,200 tonnes of PPE waste to the ocean; the Indus river, which arises in western Tibet, carried 4,000 tonnes and the Yangtze river in China 3,700 tonnes. In Europe, the Danube carried the most plastic pandemic waste into the ocean: 1,700 tonnes.

The top 10 rivers accounted for 79% of pandemic plastic discharge, the top 20 for 91%, and the top 100 for 99%. About 73% of the discharge was from Asian rivers followed by European watercourses (11%), with minor contributions from other continents, the report said.

“These findings highlight the hotspot rivers and watersheds that require special attention in plastic waste management,” the authors said.

“We find a long-lasting impact of the pandemic-associated waste release in the global ocean. At the end of this century, the model suggests that almost all the pandemic-associated plastics end up in either the seabed (28.8%) or beaches (70.5%).”

The authors said the findings showed better medical waste management was needed in pandemic epicenters, especially in developing countries.

## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	11/09 Police shoot, kill Norway knife attacker
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/man-knife-attacks-passers-norway-shot-dead-81051358">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/man-knife-attacks-passers-norway-shot-dead-81051358</a>
GIST	<p>COPENHAGEN, Denmark -- A man reportedly armed with a knife threatened passers-by on the streets of the Norwegian capital, Oslo, on Tuesday, before being shot dead by police, officials said.</p> <p>Norwegian media published footage of the alleged attacker, naked from the waist up and wielding a knife. Police initially suggested that passers-by had been wounded, but later said that only one police officer was slightly hurt.</p> <p>"We have so far no information that this is terror-related," Senior Police Chief Egil Joergen Brekke told a news conference.</p> <p>"To us, this appears to be a stand-alone act, so that there is no reason to fear for the safety of the city for others. This is a person who is known to us in the past and who has a history," Brekke told reporters.</p> <p>The first reports to the police shortly before 9 a.m. were about a man with a knife running after another person, Brekke said. A nearby patrol car in the Bislett neighborhood of northern Oslo rushed to the scene and first tried to stop the man by running him down before it drove into a building between a flower shop and a cafe to halt the man's progress.</p> <p>The man managed to open the car door, police spokesman Torgeir Brenden said.</p> <p>He said "several shots" were fired at the man but did not specify whether it was the police officers in the car who opened fire. Brenden said the perpetrator was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died.</p> <p>Norwegian media said up to six shots were heard, citing witnesses. Brekke could not give detailed information, saying the Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs is probing the events — which is customary in Norway when police officers use firearms.</p> <p>"To my knowledge, there are no other injured," Brekke, the police chief, said.</p> <p>Last month a man armed with a bow and arrow and a knife killed five people in a small town southwest of Oslo.</p> <p>Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said that he understood "very well" why locals experienced Tuesday's events as dramatic.</p> <p>"But if you compare with other large cities in Europe, Oslo is a safe city," he told Norwegian news agency NTB.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Shootings across US continue to rise
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/living-gun-violence-shootings-us-continue-rise/story?id=80949362">https://abcnews.go.com/US/living-gun-violence-shootings-us-continue-rise/story?id=80949362</a>
GIST	<p>In Philadelphia, there were 1,500 people shot through October this year, with nearly 400 people killed, according to the Gun Violence Archive.</p> <p>At numerous <a href="#">schools in Philadelphia</a>, students district wide are worried about going to <a href="#">school</a>.</p> <p>"The environment is a hostile environment," Joshua Corneilius, a 17-year-old senior at a north Philadelphia school, told ABC News. "It's a real war zone."</p>



Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw told ABC News Chief Justice Correspondent Pierre Thomas that while the city is seeing a reduction in gun violence, they are still confiscating guns at a record pace.

"We're on pace to get 6,000 illegal crime guns off the street this year; we've made a record number of arrests for carrying guns illegally," she said. "We're dealing with a culture here, there's a culture of violence that we are trying to break through."

Gun violence is not unique to Philadelphia. In cities all over the country, homicides have been on the rise this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

ABC News has been [tracking](#) the gun violence across the country -- and amid a spike against the backdrop of the pandemic, thousands of Americans are meeting a violent end from firearms. During just one week in July, there were 430 deaths and over a 1,000 people shot, according to data collected from the Gun Violence Archive.

"The number of families that are impacted in 2021, [are] more than in 2020, more than 2019," Mark Bryant, executive director of the Gun Violence Archive, told ABC News as part of an in-depth project examining the toll of gun violence and potential solutions for an ABC News Live special, "American Epidemic: One Nation Under Fire."

The Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit database that tracks gun violence across the county, said more than 17,000 people have died this year as a result of guns, not including suicides, and more than 34,000 people have been injured.

Fatal domestic violence incidents have also accelerated during the pandemic. According to a study from The Reveal and from The Center of Investigative Reporting, homicides caused by gunfire between intimate partners rose 25% from 2019 to 2020.

In addition to domestic violence and urban shootings that are on the rise in 2021, mass shootings are also up, the archive said. So far this year, there have already been more than 600 mass shootings, with four or more people shot or killed. According to the archive, there were 611 mass shootings in 2020, 417 in 2019, 336 in 2018 and 346 in 2017.

Ten people, including a police officer, [were killed in Boulder, Colorado](#), in March when a gunman opened fire at a King Soopers grocery store, where residents had gathered to shop and receive COVID-19 vaccines. As of Nov. 9, it was the deadliest mass shooting of 2021.

Emily Giffen, who was an employee at the supermarket when the shooting started, recalled the moment the shooting began.

"I was watching like a show I was really hooked on Netflix on my phone," Emily Giffen told Thomas. "I heard just like pop, pop, pop."

The shooting of the first victim occurred right in front of her, she said.

"She called me, and she was screaming, and I really couldn't even understand much," Rona Trout, Giffen's mother, told ABC News.

"There was just a bunch of pops," Giffen said. "And the man fell and was on the ground. And then we see the attacker come up; he has his larger gun and shot that man like five more times in the back."

The suspected shooter, 22-year-old Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, was charged with 10 counts of murder. [Experts and psychologists](#) have since said he is not competent to stand trial.

	<p>The shooting scarred Giffen, who moved back home to Lancaster, Pennsylvania.</p> <p>"For the first like month, and it was just every time I close my eyes, it was it was the only thing I could see," she said. "I avoid going out to like big holiday gatherings. I get very stressed out at big events."</p> <p>Giffen has a new job working with her dad in Pennsylvania. She said she hopes more can be done to address the issue of gun violence, as the pain of the incident continues to haunt her to this day.</p> <p>"There are days where I'll be driving to work and I'll just start tearing up ... it is hard," she said.</p> <p>So far this year, there have been 17,723 deaths due to gun violence, not including suicides. There were more than 19,400 shooting deaths in 2020; 15,400 in 2019; 14,800 in 2018 and 15,600 in 2017.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/09 Lessons from Chicago 'violence interrupter'
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/lessons-violence-interrupter-shootings-continue-ravage-chicago/story?id=80462349">https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/lessons-violence-interrupter-shootings-continue-ravage-chicago/story?id=80462349</a>
GIST	<p>As gun violence <a href="#">continues to skyrocket in Chicago</a>, the police, experts and city officials are scrambling for answers, but few understand gun violence like Reggie Woods.</p> <p>Woods lost family, friends and community members to shootings, and was once a perpetrator of gun violence himself. He is now on the front lines of prevention as a street outreach worker or "violence interrupter" for the violence prevention team at UCAN Chicago, a social services organization that serves youth.</p> <p>Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, shootings have spiked in the city, according to Chicago Police Department crime statistics. The most recent <a href="#">data</a> shows that through Nov. 8, there have so far been 3,105 shooting incidents in 2021, an increase of 10% over 2020 and a 66% increase compared with 2019.</p> <p>Woods' job is to diffuse and mediate conflicts that could escalate into shootings, teach young people about alternatives to gun violence and connect them with resources that the social services organization offers to ease some of the hardships they endure.</p> <p>"We've located hotspots in our community where we canvas daily and we do on-site mediations and put out fires before they get started on the front end," Woods told ABC News.</p> <p>The violence interrupter model started in Chicago in 1995, and over the past 15 years, it has been adopted by major cities across the country. Some advocates have argued that community-based prevention efforts should replace police, while others see them as complementary.</p> <p>But has this approach worked?</p> <p>According to experts who study and evaluate solutions to gun violence, research shows that the concept is "promising," but challenges persist when it comes to implementation and funding; however, a consistent merit of the model is the value of the violence interrupters themselves.</p> <p><b>'Most people are just a product of their environment'</b></p> <p>Woods is from the neighborhood of North Lawndale on the West Side of Chicago -- where 46% of the population has a household income of \$25,000 or less, according to <a href="#">data</a> from the American Community Survey. According to CPD crime statistics, gun violence has been on the rise in the district that includes North Lawndale.</p> <p>Woods said that while he was growing up in the 1980s and early 1990s, the crack epidemic hit the city and gangs ruled the streets.</p>

He was the youngest of seven children and, growing up without a father, his older brother Derrick was a father figure to him and his best friend.

Derrick was involved in the gang world in Chicago, and for Reggie, that world was all he knew.

In the mid-1990s, Reggie was a teenager when Derrick, who was in his late 20s, was shot and killed on the streets.

"My brother was everything to me ... losing my big brother, I had lost focus, I had lost the will to live at one point," he said.

A few years later, at the age of 18, Woods was convicted for an attempted triple homicide with a firearm. "I was real reckless ... until I had my first daughter, I had really no purpose," he said.

### **The power of 'credible messengers'**

Around the time Woods was released from prison, CeaseFire -- the first violence interruption program -- launched in Chicago.

It was based on a public health approach to gun violence prevention that was developed by epidemiologist Gary Slutkin in 1995.

Slutkin argued that former gang members and individuals who had gone through the criminal justice system like Woods could help change the behavior of some of the most high-risk individuals -- those who own weapons, have gone through the criminal justice system in the past or have affiliations with gangs or groups that engage in criminal activity.

"[Violence interrupters] are from the same streets, grew up in the same areas and had the same experiences as young people and so they just have more access and access means influence," said Jeffrey Butts, director of the Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "The possibility of influencing someone's behavior and attitude is stronger if you come at them as an equal."

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, CeaseFire deployed former gang members into targeted communities to convince gang leaders to urge followers to stop shooting each other, according to Daniel Webster, director of the Center for Gun Policy and Research at Johns Hopkins University.

"A lot of the violence had been very group to group kind of violence," Webster said, explaining that CeaseFire outreach workers were able to get some gang leaders to call a truce by convincing them it was in their best interest.

"The underlying motivation had to do with drug profits," Webster said. "... If you keep shooting people, it's gonna mess up your business, you're gonna get more law enforcement in here, it's gonna scare away your customers ... so get your people to stop it."

A 2009 [evaluation](#) of the program sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, "found that CeaseFire had a significant positive impact on many of the neighborhoods in which the program was implemented, including a decline of 16 to 28 percent in the number of shootings in four of the seven sites studied."

Woods was one of the interrupters responsible for that.

He said that the birth of his daughter Renia in November 1997 was a turning point for him, and although he was set to spend the next five years in prison, he vowed to change his life.

While he was incarcerated, he earned his GED and a college degree, and when he was released from prison in 2002, he became involved in peace-making in his neighborhood.

"I was just on the streets trying to steer kids away from killing each other and getting caught up the way I got caught up," he said.

When he learned of the Ceasefire program, he became an official violence interrupter, but when the program lost funding -- an ongoing challenge for many sites -- Woods encountered outreach workers from UCAN and has been working with them for the past four years.

He said that his life experience is what helps him relate and connect with high-risk youth.

"I grew up with their fathers, their fathers ran the streets with me, so being a credible messenger in my own right, their mothers and fathers understood what life I lived," he said. "... they're more willing to give their kids to me to help them."

### **How the program works**

The first job of a violence interrupter is to identify high-risk individuals in the community, according to Frank Perez, the leader of the violence intervention team at UCAN.

"We have these seven or eight different categories that tell us this is the right type of individual that we need to go after," he said, including, "someone who is known to be a known gang member, someone who is known to be a weapons carrier, someone who is known to be involved in high-risk activity in the streets, drug dealing, gambling, you know, things of that nature."

After making the connection, a violence interrupter serves as a mediator to help solve conflicts between community members, Woods said.

That is an area where the team has been successful, Perez said, but added that it's difficult to quantify.

"We do these things called mediations where we're able to disrupt stuff on the front end, and help or stop a retaliation to something bad that's already happened," Perez said. "And as a researcher, you really can't quantify that stuff. Because I can tell you that I had 70 mediations, but how do I add something that didn't turn into gun violence?"

In order to motivate "clients" to stay connected with UCAN staff, violence interrupters connect individuals with case managers who meet with them to determine what kind of help they may need -- from food and health care, to finding a job -- and how resources UCAN offers can assist them.

### **'I don't think we can reach everybody'**

It has become "much more challenging" to work with the violence interruption model over the past decade, Webster said, because gangs "don't have the same kind of influence" and many of the disputes are personal and taking place on social media, making them more difficult to track or mediate.

"It's just a lawless situation. Right now it's just basically every man for himself in Chicago," Woods said, explaining that gangs, which had influence over large swaths of the population, have splintered off into "a lot of cliques" with no structure and no clear leadership.

According to Perez, there are at most a dozen violence interrupters working in the neighborhood of [North Lawndale](#), which has a population of nearly 34,000 and about the same number work in [Roseland](#), which has a population of about 45,000.

Both neighborhoods are in [districts](#) where shooting incidents have continued to surge for the past four years, according to Chicago Police Department [crime statistics](#).

"One of the pitfalls to this work is I don't think we can reach everybody," Woods said. "I think we're going to be able to reach them one at a time. To get to everybody we're going to have to do a lot more work."

In Baltimore, where the majority of shootings are motivated by personal disputes, the staff at Safe Streets - a program also modeled after CeaseFire -- is facing similar challenges.

Rashad Singletary, the associate director of gun violence prevention in Baltimore's Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, said that although Safe Streets has been able to grow from four sites to 10 sites with additional funding from the city, the 10 sites only reach 2.6 miles of Baltimore, a city that spans 92 miles of Maryland.

Webster, who has led evaluations of Safe Streets since its launch in 2007, said that a 2012 [study](#) published by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that Safe Streets workers were successful at reducing gun violence in three of four neighborhoods where sites were established.

Although results of a 2015 [evaluation](#) were more mixed, Webster said another finding was that young people in neighborhoods with violence interruption programs were less likely to believe gun violence was an acceptable way to respond to conflict.

According to Butts, this key measure of success was also found in a 2017 [evaluation](#) of violence interrupter programs in New York City.

"We're not even very good at funding and managing these programs and yet, we're still seeing effects," Butts said. "... just imagine what we could do if we got serious about managing them and implementing them properly."

### **No badge and no protection**

Despite the fact that their jobs are dangerous and demanding, the salaries of violence interrupters are "abysmally low," Webster said, and they often live in neighborhoods where poverty and gun violence are rampant.

"[As a violence interrupter], you're gonna work in one of the most dangerous cities in America, you're gonna work in some of the most violent neighborhoods in that city," he said. "And you're going to connect with the most risky people who might shoot or be shot. And your job is to keep them from shooting each other, and we're not going to give you a badge [or] a gun."

Over the past year, this reality hit home for the staff at Safe Streets.

Dante Barksdale, a Safe Streets outreach coordinator, and Kenyell "Benny" Wilson, a Safe Streets violence interrupter, were shot and killed in separate incidents in January and July. They were beloved and longtime members of the team who had devoted their lives to reducing gun violence.

"We were devastated, it was very traumatizing. It's very difficult to say their names or to think of them, and to not feel that consistent void in our hearts because they were definitely individuals who impacted the community in such an incredible way," Singletary said. "And for them to lose their lives to the same thing that we tried to save thousands of lives from, it was very, very disheartening and tragic."

A few years ago, Woods experienced a tragedy of his own.

His firstborn daughter Renia, whose birth inspired him to change his life, was [killed](#) in Indianapolis in 2016. She was 18 -- about the same age Woods was when she was born.

"[Losing my daughter] made me more driven to reach more parents to try to help more families not to go through what I went through," he said, explaining that although Renia was not killed by gun violence, the pain of losing a child to violence is the same.

Asked if he has felt unsafe while on the job, Woods said that to be a violence interrupter, "you've got to have thick skin."

	<p>"I don't think I'd be effective at my job if I was scared," he said.</p> <p>"I think the only thing that I wish I could do better is to get some more of these kids and have more resources to give them. As far as being scared of them, no. Most of these kids are scared of themselves."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Teen suspect arrest; school bomb threat</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/teenage-suspect-arrested-social-media-threats-high-schools/293-4aad360e-cf55-47a6-ae1c-1607f5baa062">https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/teenage-suspect-arrested-social-media-threats-high-schools/293-4aad360e-cf55-47a6-ae1c-1607f5baa062</a>
GIST	<p>MEDICAL LAKE, Wash. — A teenage suspect was arrested by Spokane County authorities after posting a bomb threat toward Medical Lake High School on social media.</p> <p>This is the second threat of violence to be reported against a high school in the Spokane area through social media, as a student at University High School <a href="#">threatened a classmate</a> just days after the incident.</p> <p>According to court documents, the 16-year-old suspect was arrested on Nov. 1 after another student reported Snapchat messages containing bomb threats to Medical Lake School Resource Deputy.</p> <p>The deputy contacted the suspect and, as the investigation progressed, developed probable cause to arrest and charge the teenager with threats to bomb or injure property.</p> <p>As Deputy Carlos interrogated the suspect, he admitted that he had been making pipe bombs and described the process of how he made them, according to court documents.</p> <p>The suspect said that he did not have a specific date in mind but was planning to go to Medical Lake High School early and place one bomb in the library, two in the cafeteria and three more scattered throughout the school. According to court documents, the suspect had been planning this attack for six months, motivated by the “sadness” and “hatred” in his school.</p> <p>The teenage suspect went on to identify three other minors and alleged that they were involved in the plan. They were interviewed by police and said that they knew the suspect was making bombs but knew nothing of the threat.</p> <p>The court documents also revealed that the week prior to being arrested, the suspect carried a bomb in his backpack on the way to school. He walked the access trail of Medical Lake and threw the bomb into the water to “get rid of it.”</p> <p><a href="#">University High School (UHS) encountered a similar threat on Nov. 5</a> when another teenager, 18-year-old Adam LL McCarty posted threats of violence toward another student. The threats were interpreted as a potential shooting, causing UHS to cancel classes for that Friday.</p> <p>Major Crimes Detectives have continued to investigate the Medical Lake incident as they work to determine if anyone else was involved.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Renton: armed suspect shot, killed</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/renton/one-person-shot-by-police-in-renton-after-reportedly-charging-at-them/281-6b6c5522-dcb3-403e-acb2-6de56a5c1fe8">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/renton/one-person-shot-by-police-in-renton-after-reportedly-charging-at-them/281-6b6c5522-dcb3-403e-acb2-6de56a5c1fe8</a>
GIST	<p>RENTON, Wash. — An armed suspect was shot by Renton police after ignoring "numerous commands" by officers Monday afternoon.</p> <p>Renton police were sent to the 500 block of SW 7th Street for reports of a person shooting at buildings just before 2 p.m. Witnesses reported the person was walking around, firing a gun at random.</p> <p>Police say the suspect was holding a gun when they found him.</p>



	<p>The suspect, according to police, was told multiple times to stop walking toward officers and to drop the gun.</p> <p>"Officers were then given no choice but to shoot the subject in order to stop the impending threat to themselves and others," a statement from Renton police reads.</p> <p>The suspect died at the scene.</p> <p>The officers involved have been put on administrative leave pending an investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Adding police reduce crime? Mixed results</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/police-crime.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/police-crime.html</a>
GIST	<p>In liberal Portland, Ore., which is facing its most violent year on record, the mayor announced a plan on Wednesday to put 200 more police officers on the streets. His announcement came a day after voters in Atlanta and in Seattle signaled their support for mayoral candidates who promised not to roll back the police force, but to expand it. In Maryland last month, Gov. Larry Hogan announced \$150 million to “Re-fund the police.”</p> <p>With shootings and homicides surging in many cities, calls to redirect money to policing are rising. But evidence that hiring more officers is the best way to reduce crime is mixed: Beefing up a police force can help, but the effects are modest and far from certain. Those who study the question say any declines in crime have to be weighed against the downsides of adding more police officers, including negative interactions with the public, police violence and further erosion of public trust.</p> <p>And there is a bigger unknown: how police hiring compares with other anti-crime measures, such as providing more summer jobs or drug treatment programs, or even keeping the same number of officers but deploying them <a href="#">more strategically</a>.</p> <p>For decades, scholars have acknowledged that local crime rates cannot be predicted by officer strength and police budgets. Sometimes a boost for policing is followed by a drop in crime; sometimes it isn’t.</p> <p>History shows that homicides fell after more officers were hired 54 percent of the time, according to Aaron Chalfin, a criminologist at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied ways of driving down crime.</p> <p>“Crime goes up and down for a million reasons that are completely independent of the police,” Dr. Chalfin said. “But we know, on average, if you look across many cities for many years, there is an effect.”</p> <p>While crime rates and officers per capita vary widely from city to city, scholars have begun to try to get an overall picture by using data on federal policing grants that were established in 1994. In a forthcoming paper, Dr. Chalfin and his co-authors found that one additional officer reduced between .06 and 0.1 homicides per year — in other words, it takes 10 to 17 new officers to save a life.</p> <p>The gains were not uniform. Overall, more Black lives were saved than white lives when police officers were added, but in Southern cities with larger Black populations the homicide rate did not budge, according to an early draft of the paper. And more officers made arrests for low-level offenses like alcohol-related infractions, which are not typically seen as contributing to public safety. More police officers may also mean that cities incur the cost of more police violence, more legal settlements and more protests.</p> <p>With more national focus on those drawbacks, not all voters are enthusiastic about beefing up police forces, even in cities with sharply increasing homicide numbers. Last week, residents of Austin, Texas, rejected by a wide margin a ballot measure that would have required the city to hire hundreds more officers.</p>

Opponents pointed out that while Austin had a record high number of homicides, cities with far more police officers per capita, including Atlanta, Chicago and Milwaukee, had experienced greater increases in their homicide rates, and cities with fewer officers per capita, including Raleigh, N.C., and El Paso, had seen homicides decline.

“If I read this margin of victory correctly, I think people understand that there is going to be crime, but are more willing to solve the question of why these things are happening as opposed to just responding to them when they do,” said Chas Moore, executive director of the Austin Justice Coalition, which opposed the measure.

Because the causes of crime vary from place to place, it can be extraordinarily difficult to disentangle the benefits of hiring more officers in any one city. After a rise in gun violence in Chicago in 2016, for example, the city announced that it would hire almost 1,000 additional officers, a number officials said was justified by a “top to bottom” staffing analysis that [watchdog groups have not been able to obtain](#). Shootings began to fall before those officers were recruited and trained.

“As long as Chicago has a cold winter, crime is going to drop,” said Tracy Siska, the executive director of the Chicago Justice Project, adding that gun violence in 2016 was abnormally high. “So you can’t say that crime went down because they hired all these new officers — no, no, no.”

Chicago’s crime numbers did fall in 2019, the year that the force reached its peak of 13,353 officers, according to data from the city’s Office of Inspector General. But the next year, the coronavirus pandemic and an increase in gun purchases appeared to play a much larger role, making it hard once again to isolate the effects of the police force size. Overall, crime plummeted while the number of shootings surged.

There is also the question — left largely unanswered by existing studies — of how the added officers are being deployed.

“Does policing the hot spot have the same effect depending on what they do — stopping everyone, targeting high-risk offenders, or just standing on a street corner with your arms folded looking mean?” asked Jeffrey A. Fagan, an expert on policing at Columbia Law School, speaking of the practice of flooding high-crime areas with officers. The answer matters, he said, because “everybody agrees you get into fewer problems with the public if you minimize the police footprint.”

Even crime statistics themselves have limitations — they are collected by the police, and the police decide what counts as a crime, said Tamara K. Nopper, a sociologist at Rhode Island College and the editor of “We Do This ’Til We Free Us,” a book on abolitionist organizing by [Mariame Kaba](#).

The numbers that get the most attention are the so-called index crimes — murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, car theft and arson. They represent a narrow definition of public safety, and advocates of shrinking or abolishing the police have taken to pointing out that they do not include civil rights violations, violence perpetrated by the police and correction officers, or even failures by those in uniform to [take precautions](#) against [spreading the coronavirus](#).

“In the end, crime data is always a tool of police propaganda,” Dr. Nopper said. “If crime is low, the police are doing their jobs. If crime is high, we need to give more money to the police. The police always win.” Perhaps because crime rates are [so hard to explain](#), they are easy to exploit. The spike in gun violence has not only prompted calls to expand police departments, it has given the police an opening to blame crime on policies they do not like, often with little evidence.

Dermot F. Shea, the New York City police commissioner, repeatedly used his bully pulpit to pin the city’s increase in shootings on bail reform, which allows people to avoid being locked up before they have been convicted. But when he was confronted with data to the contrary at a hearing in Albany last month, he was [forced to backpedal](#).

	<p>Perhaps the biggest drawback of the available evidence on policing is that it does not compare the benefit of more officers on the street with the benefit of expanding other measures that have been shown to reduce crime: drug treatment, mental health crisis responders, or summer jobs for young people.</p> <p>In a recent survey of criminal justice experts, about two-thirds agreed that increasing police budgets <a href="#">would improve public safety</a>. But many more of them — 85 percent — said that increasing spending on housing, health and education would do so.</p> <p>Nor do they measure the comparative effect of asking the police to absent themselves entirely, as in <a href="#">a five-day experiment in a Brooklyn neighborhood</a> last year that reportedly saw 911 calls drop nearly to zero.</p> <p>In New York City, a randomized <a href="#">trial of street lighting</a> reduced outdoor, nighttime index crimes by 36 percent. In Philadelphia, <a href="#">cleaning up vacant lots</a> corresponded to a 29 percent reduction in gun violence. A number of studies have documented the effectiveness of <a href="#">violence interruption programs</a> run by “credible messengers” who are respected in their communities.</p> <p>In the longer term, <a href="#">Medicaid expansion</a>, <a href="#">access to drug treatment and mental health care</a>, and even a <a href="#">guaranteed basic income</a> have also been found to reduce crime — perhaps with fewer downsides than policing.</p> <p>“I think when one is talking about what’s an alternative to just adding police, well, putting some serious investment into the kind of program for at-risk youth that really gives them a concrete possibility for a real job,” said Elliott Currie, a criminologist at the University of California, Irvine. “That’s where you really get the bang for the buck.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Police recover ghost gun; felony arrest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-police-recover-ghost-gun-after-felony-arrest/BGJGF5EX3NAFTOSIRE7OMH3EEI/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-police-recover-ghost-gun-after-felony-arrest/BGJGF5EX3NAFTOSIRE7OMH3EEI/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police recovered a ghost gun on Sunday evening after arresting a felon and recovering a stolen car, according to Seattle police.</p> <p>Ghost guns have no serial number and are assembled from individually purchased parts, making them difficult to track and regulate.</p> <p>Around 6 p.m. on Sunday, an officer saw a man walking away from a stolen Honda Civic that was parked near the 7000 block of East Marginal Way South.</p> <p>When the man returned to the car, the officer pulled his patrol car behind the man, who got out of the Honda and ran off.</p> <p>Officers chased after him and arrested him a few blocks away.</p> <p>A loaded AR-15 style rifle was found inside the car and after closer inspection discovered it was a ghost gun.</p> <p>The arrested man is a convicted felon and his prohibited from possessing firearms.</p> <p>The 40-year-old man was booked into King County jail on investigation of auto theft and firearm charges.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Arrests: smuggling animal parts in Seattle</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/seattle-grand-jury-indicts-two-congolese-men-for-allegedly-smuggling-poached-ivory-rare-white-rhino-horns/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/seattle-grand-jury-indicts-two-congolese-men-for-allegedly-smuggling-poached-ivory-rare-white-rhino-horns/</a>

## GIST

Two foreign nationals from the Democratic Republic of Congo were arrested outside Seattle last week and indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of conspiracy and money laundering for allegedly smuggling elephant ivory and rhino horns into the United States.

Herdade Lokua, 23, and his cousin, 31-year-old Jospin Mujangi, both of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are accused of working with a middle man — described in the 11-count indictment as an “unindicted co-conspirator” — to facilitate four shipments of the poached items into Seattle in August, September and May of last year, according to court documents.

Both men arrived in Washington on Nov. 2 to negotiate further shipments of prohibited animal parts and were arrested in Edmonds, according to officials from the Department of Homeland Security. They appeared Thursday in U.S. District Court, where they pleaded not guilty to charges, including conspiracy, money laundering, smuggling and violations of the Lacey Act, which prohibits submitting false records in interstate or foreign commerce.

The indictment alleges the shipments were in violation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), an international agreement among 183 nations, including the United States, aimed at protecting plants and animals threatened with extinction.

Both men were ordered held, pending further hearings. A trial date was set for Jan. 10.

Officials have said [Washington has been a hub for smuggling illegal animal parts](#) because, in part, of its location as a travel hub on the West Coast and its proximity to Asia, where the demand for these items is high.

In all, the indictment alleges the men facilitated the smuggling of four packages containing a total of 49 pounds of ivory from endangered African elephants and five pounds of horn from the African white rhinoceros, also listed as an endangered species. They were paid \$14,500 by an undercover Homeland Security agent for the ivory and an additional \$18,000 for the rhino horn, according to the indictment.

An additional \$3.5 million worth of ivory, rhino horns and pangolin scales were seized in the Congo, according to the Department of Homeland Security. The two men were allegedly in talks to smuggle pangolin scales into the United States, the indictment alleges.

According to the indictment, the ivory — which was intended for decorative carvings — was cut into rectangular pieces, painted black, and concealed in a shipment of ebony wood, with a manifest saying it was valued at \$60.

The indictment alleges Lokua offered to send larger shipments of ivory concealed in ocean-container shipments of bulk rubber. Lokua reportedly told the unindicted co-conspirator he also could send larger shipments of ivory, rhino horn and scales from pangolins, a nocturnal mammal also known as the scaly anteater.

The men were arrested when they arrived in Washington to negotiate the deal, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

David Yost, a spokesman for the Seattle office of DHS, said the rhino horn was intended for “medicinal purposes.” The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services reports that rhino horn is used in traditional Chinese medicine for a variety of purposes, including to lower fevers and reduce symptoms of gout.

The conspirators also discussed importing large quantities of pangolin scales. According to the indictment, pangolins are believed to be the most trafficked animal in the world, with their keratin scales used in traditional Chinese medicine. Their meat is considered a delicacy in some cultures.

The co-conspirator agreed to purchase roughly 55 pounds of pangolin scales, to be concealed in a shipment of wood chips, but the shipment was never made, according to the indictment. The charges

	<p>allege there were discussions of smuggling as much as 1,100 pounds of pangolin scales into the United States in exchange for \$30,000 cash.</p> <p>The charges allege the smuggling operation involved bribing African customs officials in Kinsasha, the capital of the DRC.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Mexico army gives drug cartels free reign?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/08/mexico-army-drug-cartels-michoacan">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/08/mexico-army-drug-cartels-michoacan</a>
GIST	<p>A small squad of soldiers with about a half-dozen trucks and sandbag emplacements stands guard on a rural highway in western <a href="#">Mexico</a>. In one direction, almost within earshot, one drug cartel operates a roadblock extorting farmers. In the other direction, a rival cartel carries out armed patrols in trucks bearing its initials.</p> <p>The Mexican army has largely stopped fighting drug cartels here, instead soldiers guard the dividing lines between gang territories so they won't invade each other's turf – and turn a blind eye to the cartels' illegal activities just a few hundred yards away.</p> <p>At the first roadblock, set up by <a href="#">the Viagras gang that has long dominated the state of Michoacán</a>, a truck stands parked across the highway and stacked sandbags protect cartel gunmen.</p> <p>Every few hours, the gunmen roll back the truck to allow farmers through, but only let through the drivers once they have paid a “toll”.</p> <p>About 3km (2 miles) down the same road, another cartel's territory begins, marked by squads of armed men and primitive homemade armored trucks bearing the letters “CJNG” – Spanish initials for the <a href="#">Jalisco New Generation cartel</a>.</p> <p>Between them stand the soldiers, doing very little at all.</p> <p>The cartel based in Jalisco state is invading neighboring Michoacán, <a href="#">causing thousands of farmers to flee, with some seeking asylum in the United States</a>.</p> <p>Mexico's defence secretary, Gen Luís Cresencio Sandoval, has publicly said the soldiers are here to stop the Jalisco cartel's incursions into Michoacán.</p> <p>The federal and state governments did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the strategy.</p> <p>Michoacán's seaport of Lázaro Cárdenas is valued by the cartels as an entry point for <a href="#">precursor chemicals from China used to make methamphetamine and fentanyl</a>. Its avocado orchards and iron ore mines are also a prime target for extortion by the Viagras.</p> <p>Jalisco's leader, <a href="#">Nemesio “El Mencho” Oseguera</a>, wants to take over all this, as well as regain control of his home town; he was born in the Michoacán hamlet of Chila.</p> <p>Security analyst Alejandro Hope says the government's strategy is clearly “some sort of non-aggression pact”.</p> <p>“There is something like an increasingly explicit attempt to administer the conflict,” Hope said. “They [soldiers] are not there to disarm the two sides, but rather to prevent the conflict from spreading. The problem is that we don't know where the army draws the line, what they are willing to accept.”</p> <p>In the mountain township of Aguililla, now dominated by Jalisco, almost 200 soldiers have been barricaded into their command post by angry residents for four months.</p>

The army has been flying in food for the troops by helicopter since townspeople used construction vehicles to blockade the army barracks in late June. Across Mexico soldiers have been taken hostage by townspeople because they know troops won't even defend themselves under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's policy of ["hugs, not bullets"](#).

Aguililla residents say they won't let the soldiers out of their barracks until the army does its job of clearing the Viagra roadblocks that make things like medical care, food, fuel, electrical or telephone repairs impossible or expensive to get.

"The most shameful thing is the absence of the government, which has become simply a spectator in a war that has left so many dead, so much destruction," said the local priest in Aguililla, the Rev Gilberto Vergara.

"[The army] just stands there watching, and ...when it can't do anything else or when one side appears to be winning, it will act," Vergara said. "But that is not the rule of law."

In September, after a Jalisco cartel offensive against the nearby town of Tepalcatepec left five local vigilantes decapitated, the army sent in helicopters, reportedly armed with revolving-barrel machine guns that can fire thousands of rounds per minute.

Since then, the army has taken up positions around Tepalcatepec, but has done the same thing as on the road to Aguililla: nothing.

"Why doesn't the army advance? Why don't they send in the helicopters again?" said a farmer in the hamlet of Taixtán, near Tepalcatepec, as he motioned down a dirt road in the direction of sorghum fields he cannot reach to harvest because Jalisco cartel snipers posted on a nearby hill.

"Since they [soldiers] came, they haven't fired a shot," said the farmer, whose "self-defense" squad regularly exchanges fire with Jalisco. The farmer, like most others interviewed, refused to give his full name.

Most of the farmers in Tepalcatepec feel they have been left alone to fight off an invasion.

Nobody asks too much about where the Tepalcatepec vigilantes got their bulletproof cars and AR-15 rifles. There are rumors that the Sinaloa cartel has sent help, as part of [that cartel's nationwide war with arch-rival Jalisco](#).

López Obrador has been seeking to avoid conflict since 2019, when [he ordered the release of Ovidio Guzmán, a son of imprisoned kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán](#), to avoid bloodshed after Sinaloa gunmen paralyzed the northern city of Culiacán.

But the government's strategy of avoiding conflict has forced inhabitants to choose sides.

"If the government is absent, then the cartels take over. It's not that we choose one, that we want this one or that one. There is a war between them, and they divide up the territory," said Vergara. "If they are here, we have to live with them. That doesn't make us accomplices, or applaud them or say one is better than another."

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HEADLINE	11/08 Missouri police: arrest; random shootings
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/missouri-serial-killer.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/missouri-serial-killer.html</a>
GIST	It started outside St. Louis in mid-September, when a man waiting at a bus stop was shot and severely injured by a stranger. The next day, the body of a teenage girl shot in the back of the head was found in the same neighborhood.



The unsolved shootings continued through the fall in impoverished Black neighborhoods across St. Louis and in Kansas City, Kan., 250 miles west. The authorities had no suspect and few clues, but the Missouri shootings had one critical thing in common: .40-caliber Smith & Wesson cartridge casings from the same handgun had been found at each location.

On Monday, law enforcement authorities in Missouri announced that they had arrested and charged a 25-year-old man suspected of killing six people and injuring two others in what appeared to be a series of random attacks.

The man, Perez D. Reed, who turns 26 on Wednesday, was charged with four counts of first-degree murder after the police tracked his cellphone and arrested him carrying a weapon that had been linked to all six shootings in Missouri.

The shootings of the man who was severely wounded at the bus stop on Sept. 12 and the teenage girl the next day were only the beginning, said Wesley Bell, the St. Louis County prosecuting attorney. Most of the attacks took place in predominantly Black areas of St. Louis marked by vacant lots and boarded homes.

Three days later, a woman was found with a fatal gunshot wound to the face at a gas station in St. Louis. The police followed a blood trail from the gas station, but the killer was not located.

About an hour later, the body of another woman, identified as Pamela Abercrombie, 49, was found about half a mile from where the blood trail had ended.

Another three days passed before the body of a 24-year-old man was found in a vacant lot not far away from the other killings — shot with a similar weapon.

“These are a lot of violent acts that occurred in a very brief period of time,” said Lt. Craig Longworth of the St. Louis County Police Department. “These seem to be random acts. Why? I can’t give an answer to that.”

By Sept. 21, the police announced that the same gun had been used in three of the recent killings, and they raised a public alarm. Days later, there was another death: The body of a man was found in Ferguson, Mo., with gunshot wounds to the head and hand.

“The commonality amongst them were handgun casings. We knew they came from the same handgun,” Richard Quinn, the F.B.I. special agent in charge in St. Louis, told reporters on Monday. “We also had a description from several witnesses and one victim that had highlighted unique physical characteristics of the subject. However, that’s where we ran up against a little bit of a wall.”

Detectives got an important lead from the police in Kansas City, where two more murders occurred a few days apart in late October and early November in the same high-rise apartment building. According to the affidavit, Mr. Reed knew at least one of his victims there well enough to have exchanged hundreds of messages.

The police there had surveillance footage of a man with a crescent tattoo on his forehead leaving the scene. Mr. Reed, who has a crescent tattoo on his forehead, had left his ID at the front desk of the building, according to the affidavit.

On Friday, the police said, they learned that Mr. Reed had purchased an Amtrak ticket to return to St. Louis from Kansas City. They followed him. He got off a few stops short of his destination, in Independence, Mo., and when the authorities detained him, he had in his possession a handgun that they believed was linked to all the Missouri crime scenes.

Mr. Reed was initially arrested on a federal charge of transporting firearms across state lines with the intent to commit a felony. The city of St. Louis later charged him with two murders, and the county charged him with two more.

Although information about the Kansas killings is detailed in the court affidavit, no charges have been filed in those killings. No shell casings were found at those scenes, and investigators were awaiting results of DNA tests.

The Kansas City Police Department identified Mr. Reed as a “person of interest” in the two killings.

In questioning, Mr. Reed denied hurting anyone, and said he had found the gun that was in his possession, according to the affidavit.

Attempts to reach Mr. Reed’s lawyer and family members in St. Louis were unsuccessful.

In 2016, Mr. Reed was arrested and charged with setting fire to his family’s house. Prosecutors dropped the arson charges after family members declined to testify against him, St. Louis County prosecutors said.

In 2017, Mr. Reed sued the public defender’s office, accusing his own lawyers of “harassment” because he was being directed to submit to several mental health evaluations.

“I informed my attorney that I am mentally fine and repeatedly refuse to participate in the exam,” he wrote.

He said he had been traumatized by being exposed to violent “people and environment” in jail.

“My family has left me. I lost my job. I can’t pay child support, which is steady accumulating,” he wrote. The case was dismissed.

Court records also show he is in the middle of a divorce.

Officials said that Friday’s arrest was the result of cooperation between law enforcement agencies from several jurisdictions.

“This investigation and this arrest should hopefully provide some assurance to the community that law enforcement, across the board, despite the many, many obstacles put in their path over the past couple of years, is working very, very hard to protect, serve and hopefully provide justice for victims of these violent crimes,” said Sayler A. Fleming, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Maj. Ryan Cousins of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department said he hoped the arrest offered solace.

“I hope this arrest somehow brings closure, at least a little bit, to their families,” he said.

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HEADLINE	11/08 Falsified steel tests for Navy submarines
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/metallurgist-navy-false-steel-tests.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/metallurgist-navy-false-steel-tests.html</a>
GIST	<p>A former metallurgist at a foundry that provides steel used to make U.S. Navy submarines pleaded guilty in federal court in Tacoma, Wash., on Monday to falsifying test results that measured the strength and toughness of the metal — a practice that prosecutors said she continued for more than three decades.</p> <p>The former metallurgist, Elaine Thomas, 67, of Auburn, Wash., who pleaded guilty to major fraud, falsified test results for more than 240 steel productions, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington said in a statement. She could face up to 10 years in prison and a \$1 million fine when she is sentenced on Feb. 14.</p>

Between 1977 and 2017, Ms. Thomas worked as a metallurgist at a steel foundry in Tacoma, Wash., owned by Atlas Castings & Technology and acquired by [Bradken Inc.](#), in 2008, according to the indictment in the case. Ms. Thomas was named director of metallurgy for the company in 2009.

Bradken produces steel casings as a subcontractor or supplier for companies that contract with the Navy, according to the indictment. The company is the Navy's leading supplier of "cast high-yield" steel used for naval submarines, prosecutors said, adding that the productions whose tests were falsified make up "a substantial percentage of the castings Bradken produced for the Navy." It was not clear which submarines might have been affected.

Around 1985 and through 2017, Ms. Thomas "knowingly devised and executed a scheme with the intent to defraud the United States Navy, and to obtain money and property by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses and representations," the indictment said.

In an example of the "scheme to defraud," the indictment said, Ms. Thomas would sometimes alter the first digit of the test results to increase weights by 10 or 20 foot-pounds on tests that determine the toughness of the steel and the "amount of dynamic force" it can withstand.

Ms. Thomas's falsified test results "caused the United States Navy to make contract payments that the Navy would not have made if it had known the true characteristics of the steel," the indictment charged.

In a statement filed in federal court on Monday by John Carpenter, a lawyer for Ms. Thomas, the former metallurgist said she "took shortcuts and made material misrepresentations."

"Ms. Thomas never intended to compromise the integrity of any material and is gratified that the government's testing does not suggest that the structural integrity of any submarine was in fact compromised," the statement said. "This offense is unique in that it was neither motivated by greed nor any desire for personal enrichment. She regrets that she failed to follow her moral compass — admitting to false statements is hardly how she envisioned living out her retirement years."

Bradken's leadership did not know about the falsified test results until May 2017, when a lab employee found out that the results had been "altered and that other discrepancies existed in Bradken's record," the U.S. attorney's office said.

Following the discovery of the falsified tests, Ms. Thomas agreed to voluntary interviews with federal agents in which she "made false statements" to cover up that she had submitted hundreds of false results, according to the indictment.

In 2019, Ms. Thomas acknowledged that she had changed some results, "but stated that she must have had a good reason to change the results," the indictment said.

The company took responsibility for falsified tests in June 2020, and also paid more than \$10.8 million in a civil settlement over the allegations that Bradken made and sold "substandard steel components for installation on U.S. Navy submarines," according to the U.S. attorney's office.

"The Navy has taken extensive steps to ensure the safe operation of the affected submarines," the U.S. attorney's office said in the statement. "Those measures will result in increased costs and maintenance as the substandard parts are monitored."

Bradken and the Navy's press office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday night.

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HEADLINE	11/08 NYPD cops misconduct: 60 cases tossed
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/nyregion/nypd-queens-detectives.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/nyregion/nypd-queens-detectives.html</a>

The Queens district attorney's office asked a judge Monday to toss out 60 criminal cases that relied on work by three former New York Police Department detectives who were later convicted of perjury, sexual assault or official misconduct.

The move is part of the office's review of cases that involved police officers who had committed crimes or workplace misconduct and who had served as "essential witnesses" in Queens prosecutions, District Attorney Melinda Katz said.

"We cannot stand behind a criminal conviction where the essential law enforcement witness has been convicted of crimes which irreparably impair their credibility," Ms. Katz said.

The office's review stems from [a letter](#) sent in May by the Legal Aid Society and other legal defense and civil rights organizations to the city's five district attorneys and the special narcotics prosecutor, identifying 20 police officers who had been convicted of crimes and two others who had engaged in work-related misconduct. The letter asked the offices to erase convictions in which the officers played a role.

The Brooklyn district attorney's office was reviewing the Legal Aid letter as part of its broader efforts to examine problematic convictions, a spokesman, Oren Yaniv, said. "Our review is nearing its end, and we expect to dismiss a number of cases," Mr. Yaniv said.

A spokeswoman for the Manhattan district attorney's office said a review of cases involving the identified police officers was ongoing, and the Bronx district attorney's office said cases involving seven police officers were under review.

A representative for the Staten Island district attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

After receiving the letter, Ms. Katz, who took office in January 2020, launched a review of the borough's cases. It found that 10 officers on the list had played roles in Queens criminal cases, Ms. Katz said Monday, adding that hundreds of cases remained under review.

In a hearing Monday afternoon in Queens Supreme Court, Justice Michelle Johnson vacated 59 convictions and cleared one person of pending charges and a warrant issued for an arrest. Most of the cases were misdemeanors or violations, but seven were felonies.

Some of the people cleared Monday had served prison terms, while others had lost jobs and licenses; one man was still on parole at the time of his dismissal, and one woman had died, Legal Aid Society lawyers said.

Of the 60 cases, 34 were based on the work of former detective [Kevin Desormeau](#), a street cop once held in high regard, who in 2018 was convicted of lying about witnessing a Queens drug deal that had not taken place. At the [sentencing](#), Justice Michael Aloise gave Mr. Desormeau no jail time and criticized the prosecutor's office for its conduct during the former officer's trial.

Mr. Desormeau later pleaded guilty in Manhattan to separate charges that he fabricated facts concerning a 2014 gun possession arrest in Washington Heights, a case that also led to charges against his former partner on the force, Sasha Cordoba.

The Queens district attorney asked Monday to dismiss 20 cases involving Ms. Cordoba, who [pleaded guilty in Manhattan](#) in 2018 to perjury and official misconduct charges in connection with the gun possession arrest. Ms. Cordoba was also convicted of a misdemeanor in the Queens drug sale case, but the judge threw out her verdict, citing lack of evidence.

Six of the cases dismissed Monday stemmed from the work of former Queens detective Oscar Sandino, who pleaded guilty in 2010 to federal civil rights charges related to the [sexual assault](#) of people in custody. In one instance, Mr. Sandino sexually abused someone under arrest in the bathroom of the 110th Precinct in Queens, the district attorney's office said.

“Criminal convictions largely based on the work of corrupt former or active N.Y.P.D. officers who engaged in misconduct while executing their duties flies in the face of oaths officers take to protect and serve New Yorkers,” said Elizabeth Felber, director of the Legal Aid Society’s wrongful conviction unit. “This unconscionable and inexcusable behavior corrodes the public’s trust in law enforcement,” she said.

The review in Queens is part of a broader movement to reassess criminal cases and convictions, some decades old, over concerns about official misconduct and perjury by police officers.

In April, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez [asked the court](#) to dismiss 90 convictions — nearly a third of them felonies — that were based on the work of a former narcotics detective, Joseph E. Franco, who had been charged with perjury and other offenses in connection with his undercover work and testimony for prosecutors.

The Manhattan district attorney’s office had charged Mr. Franco in 2019 with 26 criminal counts, saying he had lied about witnessing drug buys. The Manhattan and Bronx district attorney’s offices, as well as the special narcotics prosecutor, have moved to vacate scores of convictions in which Mr. Franco was involved.

Mr. Franco was fired by the Police Department in April 2020. He has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Ex-officers convicted for 2019 Taser death</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/oklahoma-police-taser-murder-conviction.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/08/us/oklahoma-police-taser-murder-conviction.html</a>
GIST	<p>Two former Oklahoma police officers were convicted on Friday of second-degree murder for using their Tasers a total of more than 50 times on an unarmed man who later died in 2019, according to court records.</p> <p>Prosecutors said the repeated use of the Tasers, also known as stun guns, by the former officers, Brandon Dingman and Joshua Taylor, was “dangerous and unnecessary” during their encounter with Jared Lakey on July 4, 2019.</p> <p>It was a “substantial factor” in the death of Mr. Lakey, 28, who stopped breathing and became unresponsive shortly after he was taken into custody by the officers, who were employed by the Wilson Police Department, court documents said. Mr. Lakey died two days later.</p> <p>The case brought further scrutiny to the <a href="#">use of Tasers by law enforcement officers</a>. Supporters say the devices are a practical alternative to often-lethal firearms, but critics point out they have contributed to many fatalities.</p> <p>In addition to second-degree murder, which is punishable by 10 years to life in prison, Mr. Dingman, 35, and Mr. Taylor, 27, were found guilty of assault and battery with a dangerous weapon by a jury in Carter County, Okla., according to court records. They are to be sentenced on Dec. 2.</p> <p>Shannon McMurray, a lawyer for Mr. Dingman, said on Monday that the former officer planned to appeal his conviction.</p> <p>Citing a medical examiner’s autopsy report, she said that Mr. Lakey had an enlarged heart and critical coronary artery disease before he died. The report listed the officers’ use of electrical weapons and restraint as contributing to Mr. Lakey’s death.</p> <p>“It’s just a tragedy for everybody,” Ms. McMurray said. “In my opinion, they acted within policy.”</p> <p>Ms. McMurray said that the officers had been trying to avoid using other types of force on Mr. Lakey. “They were truly, truly concerned for his safety and theirs if they had gone hands-on,” she said.</p>

Warren Gotcher, a lawyer for Mr. Taylor, said on Monday that his client would also file an appeal.

“We’re very disappointed in the verdict,” said Mr. Gotcher, who also pointed to Mr. Lakey’s health as playing a significant role in his death. “No one could look at him and tell that he had that much of a diseased heart.”

The police department in Wilson, which is about 100 miles south of Oklahoma City, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A lawsuit filed by Mr. Lakey’s family said that his body was riddled with Taser probes and that medical providers had told the family that he died from multiple heart attacks.

Spencer Bryan, a lawyer for Mr. Lakey’s parents, Doug and Cynthia Lakey, said in a statement on Monday that they were “grateful to the jury and prosecution for taking these officers off the streets,” but admonished the police chief over his explanation during the trial about why the officers had kept using their Tasers.

The chief, Kevin Coley, testified that the officers had been attempting to cause neuromuscular incapacitation in Mr. Lakey but that he had kept moving around on the ground, the television station [KXII reported](#). The chief could not be reached on Monday.

During the officers’ encounter with Mr. Lakey, they were responding to a call that involved his “acting in a disorderly way,” according to the State Bureau of Investigation.

When Mr. Lakey would not comply with the officers’ commands, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Dingman used their Tasers a combined total of more than 50 times, “which greatly exceeded what would have been necessary or warranted by the attendant circumstances,” court records said.

The records said that “such dangerous and unnecessary” use of the Tasers was a “substantial factor” in bringing about Mr. Lakey’s death.

Craig Ladd, the district attorney for the 20th Judicial District in Oklahoma, which includes Carter County, said on Monday that police officers were trained to limit Taser exposure to 15 seconds or less and to avoid simultaneously using their devices. But in the case of Mr. Lakey, he said, the electrical connection from the officers’ Tasers lasted 3 minutes and 14 seconds.

“They clearly failed to adhere to these safety guidelines,” Mr. Ladd said, adding that in Oklahoma, officers are only permitted to use the degree of force “reasonably necessary” under the circumstances.

“They Tased Jared because he was lying naked in a ditch and wouldn’t put his hands behind his back when they asked him to, even though it wasn’t clear whether Jared truly understood what was going on or what he was being requested to do,” he said. “He never made any aggressive moves towards the officers, swung at them, lunged at them, or kicked at them.”

Tasers, which are part of a class of “less lethal” tools, are designed to help law enforcement officers temporarily immobilize a person by jolting them with electricity.

Axon Enterprise, which makes them, says the devices save lives and prevent injuries. But more than 1,000 people in the United States have died after being shocked with stun guns by police, according to [a 2017 investigation by Reuters](#).

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HEADLINE	11/09 Military facing jail time for Capitol riot
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/09/politics/january-6-veterans-military/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/09/politics/january-6-veterans-military/index.html</a>



(CNN)More than 70 current and former members of the US military, who all swore an oath to defend the Constitution, are now facing criminal charges and special attention from prosecutors for attacking their own democracy by [storming the US Capitol on January 6](#).

For these defendants, many with decorated combat records and multiple overseas deployments, their military service has become a double-edged sword in their legal cases. The Justice Department has argued that rioters' veteran status is an aggravating factor, and some judges have held veterans to a higher standard while considering whether to send them to jail, either as punishment for their crimes or while their cases play out.

Prosecutors say this is retired Sgt. Jeffrey McKellop wearing tactical gear outside the US Capitol. A judge ruled that McKellop, a 23-year Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was too dangerous to release before trial.

Retired Sgt. [Jeffrey McKellop](#), a 23-year Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, was charged with assaulting police with a flagpole. He pleaded not guilty but has been in jail since March. District Judge Carl Nichols said his military service shows "he should have known better" and ruled against releasing him before trial.

"I really credit his military service. It's really remarkable, and I thank him for it," Nichols said at a recent detention hearing. "But it suggests that he should have known better. I am more concerned about his conduct that day than I might have been if it was some random person."

But other veterans who were charged with violent crimes were released from jail shortly after their arrest. And some veterans have successfully pushed for leniency, because of their valiant battlefield experiences, or due to injuries they received while serving their country, including PTSD.

For instance, the [chief judge of DC's federal court](#) balked when prosecutors requested a monthlong jail term for a retired lieutenant colonel who pleaded to a nonviolent misdemeanor.

"It surprises me that the government is holding that service -- that, I think, most Americans would have enormous respect for -- against this man," Chief Judge Beryl Howell said about Leonard Gruppo, before sentencing him to three months of house arrest, probation and a \$3,000 fine.

More than 650 people have been charged by the Justice Department in the January 6 insurrection, and about [1 in 10](#) defendants served in the military, according to CNN's analysis of Pentagon records and court filings. A quarter of the veterans facing charges have alleged ties to far-right extremist groups, like the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys, which recruit ex-military and retired police officers.

At a hearing for alleged Oath Keeper Joshua James, Judge Amit Mehta said it was "mystifying" that James had played "an active role" in the assault, given the Purple Heart he had earned in Iraq. James has pleaded not guilty to conspiracy and other felony charges, and was released before trial.

"It really does cut against what I think you stand for, and what this country is all about," Mehta said.

### **Veterans behind bars**

It hasn't always worked, but federal prosecutors have repeatedly argued in court that the veteran-rioters deserve harsher treatment. After all, they swore an oath to defend the Constitution when they joined the military, but they aided an attempted coup on January 6.

McKellop's defense attorney acknowledged that he "probably should have known better" because of his [experience in the Special Forces](#) and later as a contractor for the CIA. Nichols, the judge, said he was afraid McKellop might fight with police again if released.

"One would think that someone who respects the rule of law wouldn't swing a flag with a tip at police officers, and cut them, and then throw it like a spear," said Nichols, an appointee of former President Donald Trump.

Magistrate Judge Michael Harvey reached a similar conclusion about retired Spc. Robert Morss, who served in Afghanistan with the Army Rangers. Videos released by the Justice Department show Morss taking on an impromptu leadership role with his fellow rioters, coordinating their movements and passing back stolen police shields that they could use to protect themselves.

At a detention hearing in July, Harvey [ruled that Morss should stay in jail](#) before trial, in part because he was "willing to use his training or experience to organize with the rioters" to subvert democracy, "thereby making their actions more effective, more forceful and more violent." Morss has pleaded not guilty.

Other prominent veterans facing charges have been behind bars essentially all year. They include [former Pvt. Jessica Watkins](#), the Ohio bar owner who is charged in the Oath Keepers conspiracy case, and [Sgt. Timothy Hale-Cusanelli](#), whose colleagues said he was an outspoken Nazi sympathizer at the Navy base where he worked. Both have pleaded not guilty.

### **'I can't bring myself to do that'**

Plenty of other veterans found more receptive audiences when asking judges to cut them a break. Many factors play a role in detention decisions, including the history and characteristics of the defendant, which gave veterans a platform to tout their heroic service for their country.

One federal judge released former Marine Sgt. [Michael Foy](#) from jail in part because of his "history of respect for and compliance with authority," though she added that Foy had violated his oath to the Constitution.

Gruppo, the retired lieutenant colonel, spent time in four war zones as a decorated medical officer. He was a liaison to [Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf](#) during the Gulf War and saw front-line combat in the Iraq War, trying to save wounded troops during the 2007 surge. At his sentencing hearing, prosecutors hit a wall when they tried to use his 27-year military career against him.

"I just don't view his military service that way. I can't bring myself to do that," said Howell, the chief judge in DC's federal court, a self-described "Army brat" who was born on a military base.

She praised Gruppo's service as "heroic" and said she was "not sure most of the (prosecutors) sitting at the government's table would ever be able to survive" what he had gone through overseas.

At every step of the way, defense attorneys have put any disabilities front and center in their legal arguments.

A judge kept [former Lance Cpl. Alex Harkrider](#) out of jail because, in large part, he said he was uncomfortable putting someone with PTSD behind bars without his service dog. And the Justice Department didn't request detention for [Mark Leffingwell](#) -- whose lawyer said he "got blown up in Iraq" while in the National Guard -- even though he punched a police officer on January 6.

Marine Corps Maj. Christopher Warnagiris, who was on active duty and stationed in Virginia on January 6, was [indicted on felony charges](#) for allegedly shoving a police officer while trying to hold open the Capitol doors. He pleaded not guilty, and prosecutors didn't object to his release.

### **'I broke that oath,' veteran says**

There's also a split among the veterans themselves, as they grapple with the fallout from January 6. Some have publicly slammed investigators and peddled conspiracy theories, while others have offered emotional apologies and owned up to their roles in the insurrection.

As the Justice Department moves to resolve the hundreds of federal cases, more than a dozen veterans have pleaded guilty to charges connected to the insurrection, according to CNN's tally. Some veterans have used plea and sentencing hearings to apologize and take responsibility.

At Gruppo's sentencing, he said it was "a huge mistake" to go to the Capitol. He apologized to the police, congressional leaders, "both presidents" and his family, adding, "I am ashamed."

Thomas Vinson struck a similar tone: "I signed up for the Air Force to take care of and defend this country," he said. "I took that oath to the Constitution. and I know I broke that oath that day by entering that building and participating in the events of January 6. It's a blemish that's going to be on myself, my family, for the rest of my life, and the country, and into the history books."

When Jonathan Sanders, a decorated former master sergeant in the Air Force, was sentenced to a misdemeanor last week, he told the judge that he "failed" his extensive military training.

"That was a personal failure on my part. I wasn't coerced, I wasn't tricked, I wasn't pushed," he said. "...That failure on my part is uncharacteristic. I know that my family, my friends, the men and women I served with and especially the men and women who trained me expected better."

Both men got probation, even though their convictions could've led to six-month jail terms.

### **Conspiracies and delusions**

Other rioters have flocked to right-wing outlets to falsely claim that the Justice Department is unfairly targeting service members because they support Trump. These claims have helped some defendants capture online fandom and sympathy from conservatives.

[Micajah Jackson](#), a former Marine with ties to the Proud Boys, was a featured speaker at a "Justice for J6" rally in Phoenix, [CNN reported](#). He pushed the false-flag theory that the FBI had colluded with police and left-wing groups to orchestrate the attack on the Capitol.

In an October interview with [Fox News host Tucker Carlson](#), Navy veteran [Thomas Caldwell](#) said the Justice Department "made me the poster boy" of the Oath Keepers and that the case against him was "total claptrap." His wife, Sharon Caldwell, said he has "given everything for this country that he loves," and solicited donations for a legal defense fund.

Similarly, former Drug Enforcement Administration agent Mark Ibrahim went on Fox News and claimed he had gone to the Capitol because a "friend I served in Iraq with" in the Army had asked him to help film the riot "so those criminals could face justice." He also claimed he had been fired from the DEA for attending the pro-Trump rally, and his story instantly went viral on conservative social media.

But prosecutors said Ibrahim's [claims on Fox News](#) were a fabrication -- and that he had repeated his story to the FBI, leading to a criminal charge of lying to investigators. He pleaded not guilty.

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HEADLINE	<b>11/09 Families of missing Blacks speak out</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/09/us/missing-black-people-arianna-fitts-daniel-robinson/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/09/us/missing-black-people-arianna-fitts-daniel-robinson/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)Arianna Fitts was just two-and-a-half years old the last time she was seen by family.</p> <p>The <a href="#">search for her</a> began when her mother, Nikki, was found murdered and left in a shallow grave in San Francisco's McLaren Park. There was no sign of the toddler.</p> <p>Arianna's aunt, Tess Fitts, has been facing the soul-destroying mystery of the double tragedy ever since.</p> <p>"I do believe that Arianna is still alive, and it would mean everything to me to know where she is and to find her," Fitts told CNN recently, and began to cry. "I wait for that day, every single day. I believe that day will come."</p>

But unlike the recent missing person case of Gabby Petito, or the disappearance of Natalee Holloway or the unsolved murder of JonBenet Ramsey, there is no army of obsessed followers also hanging on every development, and no sustained media coverage.

Asked why Arianna was not a household name, Tess Fitts took a long pause.

"I honestly thought she was," she said at last. "It's kind of surprising to me to know that she's not."

Fitts says she chooses not to dwell on the issue of race, whether there might have been more attention if her sister and her toddler niece were White, not Black, rich not working poor.

It's an issue faced by an untold number of families of color looking for missing relatives: Have race and bias, conscious or unconscious, hindered their quest for answers?

David Robinson, an Army veteran, [searching for his son Daniel](#) in the Arizona desert, doesn't want to believe race plays a role but he can't shake the feeling it's true.

"I don't even want to think like this, but in my situation, people think of me or his mother different. Like we love our children less or something, or they are less important or something. That's what it feels like," he said.

Carmen Bolden Day thinks there would be [more answers in the disappearance and death of her son Jelani](#) if there had been the same attention on him as with the Petito case. Native Americans and other people of color also say [authorities can be slow to act](#).

### **'Someone wanted her'**

Tess Fitts smiles when she thinks of Arianna, describing her as "a very energetic, bubbly and curious kid." "We'd be out in public [and] she'd just wave at strangers with a smile and people would respond to that," Fitts said. "Very intelligent, very curious about things, and she also had a little bit of sass sometimes too." But Fitts's face becomes strained when she moves to what happened.

"I think that Arianna was taken because someone wanted her. Someone fell in love with her and they wanted her as their own," she said.

For her, the murder of her sister Nikki and the disappearance of Arianna, have to be linked. Nothing else makes sense.

She says Nikki Fitts would sometimes have babysitters in Oakland care for her daughter overnight while she took late or early shifts at a Best Buy store in San Francisco, using public transport for the lengthy commutes.

It is not known when Nikki Fitts last held her daughter, but they were last seen together mid-February 2016, according to the family.

Nikki Fitts was reported missing in early April 2016. Police say [she was "lured out" by a call](#) to "go meet the babysitter."

Police initially had some leads but none led to Arianna. No charges have been made in the murder of Nikki Fitts or the disappearance of Arianna.

And five years later on, there is still no trace of the once-toddler who's now likely lost some baby teeth, grown a ton, and maybe learned to ride a bike.

There has been media coverage of Arianna's case. The SFPD says the case is open and active, the FBI [included her on one of its podcasts](#) and there are rewards for information.

But even at the time she first went missing, there was no national frenzy to find her.

"It breaks my heart that Arianna is not with her mom and not with her family, but it also breaks my heart even more that I know that Nikki wants nothing more than for Arianna to be with us, to be home," Tess Fitts said with tears in her eyes.

### **Having to battle for attention**

David Robinson is also in the hellscape of not knowing what has happened, in [this case to his son, Daniel](#), who went missing from a worksite outside Buckeye, Arizona. Police said they searched three times for Daniel, a geologist, on the ground and with helicopters but came up with nothing.

Robinson became frustrated from what he thought was a lack of official action and traveled to Arizona, to search for his son himself, hiring a private investigator too. He also began pleading for media attention of the kind that was being directed at the search for Gabby Petito.

"I love my son, he is my responsibility ... but we need help," Robinson told CNN. "My son means the world to me, and to his mother and his siblings. We would like to have that same kind of attention."

Five months into what Robinson calls his mission to find his son, evidence and clues have turned up. After local media did a story, Daniel said help began to arrive, regular citizens who volunteered their time for a stranger.

Four weeks after Daniel Robinson went missing, police called David Robinson. The younger man's car was found crashed. His cell phone, the clothes he was wearing that day and a case of water were all found in and around the wrecked car. But no Daniel.

So the volunteers and Robinson continued to search. They have found all sorts of the things. The most disturbing: human remains.

"We found a human skull," Robinson said.

Buckeye Police Chief Larry Hall told CNN evidence was being assessed, but it was not Daniel. "We're waiting for DNA to come back on that case before we can positively identify with the victim in that," he said.

Volunteer searchers looking for Daniel may have helped solve another missing person's case. But David Robinson is left with even more questions and will keep trying to get his son's story out as he seeks a resolution.

An ally in his work is Derrica Wilson, a former police officer, who co-founded [the Black and Missing Foundation](#) to highlight cases of missing people of color.

She said no missing person of color has become a household name in the US.

"There's not one," she told CNN. "I really think there is unconscious bias out there."

Because of course, there are many missing people of all races. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children said out of nearly 30,000 children reported missing in 2020, more than [62% were Black, Latino, multiracial, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islanders](#).

"There are a lot of Gabby Petitos and Natalee Holloways in the black and brown community," Wilson said.

Tess Fitts lives that truth every day, looking for her niece. She says the San Francisco police have been working her case but Arianna is not home and she cannot live with it.

	<p>So she has to taken up some of the challenge, creating a website, a Facebook group, and talking about Arianna whenever she is asked.</p> <p>"I want everyone to know Arianna's name. I want everyone to know what Arianna looks like. I want everyone to know that Arianna is some place she does not belong," she said.</p> <p>"I want everyone, everyone to know."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 Portugal UN troops in smuggling scheme</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/portuguese-troops-suspected-african-smuggling-scheme-81033884">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/portuguese-troops-suspected-african-smuggling-scheme-81033884</a>
GIST	<p>LISBON, Portugal -- Police in Portugal searched military installations and homes across the country on Monday following a tip-off that Portuguese troops stationed with a United Nations force in Africa have smuggled diamonds, drugs and gold back into Europe.</p> <p>Soldiers are suspected of smuggling the items on military cargo planes traveling between Central African Republic and Portugal, the office of the Portuguese Armed Forces Chief of Staff said in a statement.</p> <p>Hundreds of elite Portuguese troops, including paratroopers and commandos, have been stationed with the U.N. force in Central African Republic in recent years.</p> <p>The Portuguese force commander on that mission was told in December 2019 about the possible involvement of Portuguese soldiers in diamond trafficking, the statement said, without providing further details of the tip-off.</p> <p>After Portuguese judicial authorities were informed, an investigation began into whether troops were working as mules to smuggle diamonds, drugs and gold back home, according to the statement.</p> <p>Police said in a statement that more than 300 officers took part in the operation targeting “a criminal network, with international links.”</p> <p>Police conducted searches of 100 sites, mostly homes, and acted on 10 arrest warrants, the statement said without elaborating.</p> <p>Following the tip-off, the military stepped up checks and inspections of military flights from Central African Republic, according to officials.</p> <p>Portuguese Defense Minister João Gomes Cravinho said he informed U.N. officials about the tip-off when it was received and told them the case was being handled by the Portuguese judiciary.</p> <p>The tip-off related to two Portuguese soldiers who were no longer in the Central African Republic, Gomes Cravinho told national news agency Lusa, in an interview published by Diario de Noticias.</p> <p>“Everything suggests that these were activities undertaken on their own initiative by a handful of soldiers and not something systemic,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>11/08 UK inquiry: mortuary abuse ‘100 victims’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-launches-inquiry-mortuary-abuse-100-victims-81038229">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uk-launches-inquiry-mortuary-abuse-100-victims-81038229</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON -- The British government announced Monday that it would launch an independent inquiry into how a hospital electrician was able to sexually abuse at least 100 corpses in hospital mortuaries.</p>



David Fuller, 67, admitted last week during his trial at Maidstone Crown Court that he murdered two women in 1987. Prosecutors said he had sexually assaulted the two women after killing them.

Police searches of Fuller's home to gather evidence in connection with the deaths uncovered around four million images of sexual abuse that included video recordings of him abusing bodies over 12 years at two hospitals in southeast England.

"Officers have tragically found evidence of 100 victims," Health Secretary Sajid Javid told lawmakers while announcing the inquiry into how Fuller was able to go undetected.

Of these victims, Javid said 81 have been formally identified, and specially trained family officers are supporting their families. Every family of a known victim has been contacted, he added.

"The inquiry will look into the circumstances surrounding the offenses committed at the hospital, and their national implications," said Javid, who apologized to the friends and family of the victims.

Javid said the inquiry's structure will be published in "due course" and that the chairman, named as experienced National Health Service executive Jonathan Michael, will hold talks with the families of the abused. Javid also said the government will look at whether the penalties for such "appalling" sexual offenses are appropriate.

Fuller pleaded guilty on Thursday to murdering Wendy Knell, 25, and Caroline Pierce, 20, in two separate attacks in the town of Tunbridge Wells in 1987. He had previously admitted to sexually abusing bodies in two hospital morgues over 12 years from 2008. Identified victims included three children and others older than 85.

He filmed himself carrying out the attacks at mortuaries inside the now-closed Kent and Sussex Hospital and the Tunbridge Wells Hospital, in Pembury, where he worked in electrical maintenance roles since 1989.

Having evaded justice for 33 years, Fuller was arrested for murder in December following new analysis of decades-old DNA evidence.

Hospitals have been asked to urgently review practices on effective CCTV coverage, with all entry and access points controlled by swipe access, risk assessments and appropriate security checks.

Javid said the inquiry will be split into two parts, with an interim report published early next year and a final report looking at the broader national picture and the wider lessons for the NHS.

"This is a profoundly upsetting case that has involved distressing offenses within the health service," said Javid. "The victims are not just those family members and friends who have been abused in this most horrific of ways, they are also those that are left behind."

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HEADLINE	11/08 France returns 26 looted treasures to Benin
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/france-returning-26-looted-treasures-back-benin/story?id=80999015">https://abcnews.go.com/International/france-returning-26-looted-treasures-back-benin/story?id=80999015</a>
GIST	<p>PARIS -- Twenty-six looted royal treasures will return to their country of origin this week after nearly 130 years of French ownership, as debate continues over repatriating artifacts.</p> <p>The pieces were looted following the war fought by France against the Kingdom of Dahomey, a former African kingdom situated in the south of present-day Benin, during the height of French colonialism in Africa.</p> <p>On Nov. 17, 1892, French troops took over a palace in the city of Abomey, causing King Béhanzin to flee, leaving behind a set of royal objects the French took.</p>

The works -- including carved wooden doors, royal thrones and statues -- had been on display in French museums since 1900. They will be returned to Benin in the course of the week.

"These artifacts returning to the country today, it's just historical for the people from Benin," Calixte Biah, curator of Ouidah Museum of History in Benin, told the Associated Press. "When you look at the craftsmanship of these artifacts, you realize that in the times of the Dahomey Kingdom, there were great artists."

French President Emmanuel Macron formalized the return of the looted treasures during a ceremony at the Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac Museum in Paris, where the pieces have been held since 2003, in late October, citing the need to "give African youth back access to their heritage."

Macron is expected to meet Benin's President Patrice Talon on Nov. 9 to sign the transfer treaty, allowing the works to be transported to Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin, and be shown to the public there.

The exhibition of looted treasures has been a cause for debate for many hundreds of years. Centuries ago, Greek statesman Polybius exhorted the victors of the future "not to make the calamities of others the adornment of their homeland."

Today, the debate over the restitution of artifacts looted during colonization is in full swing. Just last month, a University of Cambridge college returned one of the artifacts looted by British soldiers known as a Benin Bronze to Nigeria.

Benin authorities had repeatedly demanded the return of the national treasures from France without success. In 2016, the French government refused Benin's requests, arguing that France was also attached to the circulation and protection of heritage and was not legally obligated to return the pieces.

But in November 2018, Macron announced the decision to return 26 pieces of the treasure of Abomey. The process to get to this point since then has included a cycle of conferences and an exhibit in Paris.

The works, including a prestigious royal chair of Yoruba kings adorned by two floors of sculpted and painted figures, were on display at the Quai Branly Museum for the final time last month before making their journey home.

According to the museum, this farewell exhibition was "highly successful," with over 15,000 visitors in one week. Following their return to Benin, the precious objects will be integrated into the Museum of the Epic of the Amazons and the Kings of Danhomè that is being built in Abomey.

Benin's Foreign Minister Aurelien Agbenonci rejoiced that "France and Benin are showing the world an example of museum and heritage cooperation through this restitution."

But critics of restitution argue that decisions like this are a "Pandora's box" that could lead to the emptying of European museums.

According to some experts, the scale of colonial spoliations in Africa is considerable.

"Statistically, I think we can say by adding up the inventories of African national museums, which hover around 3,000 or 5,000 when they are large collections, that 90 to 95% of African heritage is outside the continent in major museums," Alain Godonou, director of the museums program at the National Heritage and Tourism Development Agency of Benin, said at a 2007 UNESCO Forum on Memory and Universality.

In order to proceed with the transfer of the Benin artworks, a new law was passed by France's Parliament in December 2020 to make it legal to return cultural artifacts seen as properties of the French state.

	<p>Bénédicte Savoy, whose research helped lead to this restitution, highlighted the international resonance of the decision, comparing it to "the fall of the Berlin wall" as he hopes for similar reflections in other European museums.</p> <p>"This restitution is a major event in the history of the 21st century," Savoy told ABC News. "Its importance cannot be underestimated."</p> <p>Yet, others are downplaying France's move, suspecting more delaying tactics on other artifacts.</p> <p>Congolese activist Mwazulu Diyabanza told ABC News, "We are awaiting a declaration of principles whereby France and its Western counterparts will recognize the crimes committed and return without any form of trial everything they have stolen and forcibly taken."</p> <p>He added, "It is not up to the thief, the prevaricator, and the dealer to decide when and how much of the works to be returned."</p>
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